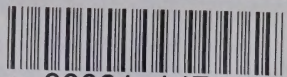




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P O E M S

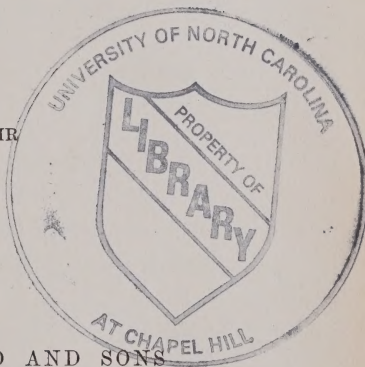


P O E M S

BY THE LATE

ISA BLAGDEN

WITH A MEMOIR



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCCLXXIII





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## MEMOIR.

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IT is in obedience to the dictates of affection, and in compliance with the wishes of those who share that sentiment with me, that I have undertaken to edit the poems contained in this volume. Some of them have already appeared, at various dates, in 'All The Year Round,' 'Once A Week,' and the 'Athenæum,' whilst the first and longest, "The Story of Two Lives," was printed in 'Fraser's Magazine' in 1864. I have to acknowledge the courtesy of the proprietors of those periodicals in permitting me to include them in the present collection.

The gifted and virtuous authoress, whose death last winter filled the widest circle of friends I have ever heard of one person possessing, with feelings of the deepest pain, was known to the public rather as a novelist than as a poetess; 'The Cost of a Secret,' and 'Agnes Tremorne,' though by no means the first in merit of her stories, having secured on their appearance an exceptional amount of attention. But neither the talents nor the tastes of Isa Blagden found their fitting field in the modern novel, which depends for its success either on skilfully-constructed plot, on highly-finished portraitures

of character, or on a realistic rendering of the superficial aspects of society. When she wrote a novel, she wrote less for the purpose of amusing the public than, in a word, of liberating her own soul ; and she discovered, as many others have done, that neither the vehicle employed, nor the audience addressed, easily lends itself to instruction. Her real genius and strength lay, I am persuaded, in poetical composition. Such, too, was her own conviction ; and it is to be regretted that, whatever her other moral qualities, she lacked the solidity and continuity of purpose to devote herself wholly to the service of the Muses, irrespectively of that encouragement and applause with which only a few fortunate individuals, so employed, have ever been indulged in their lifetime. Still, like the fountain of Trevi, the sacred Hippocrene compels those who have once tasted of its refreshing waters to thirst for them evermore ; and it must not be supposed that this little volume contains more than a selection from her poems. I can testify to her anxious desire that they should some day be given to the world in a collected and permanent form ; nor do I doubt, had she lived, that she would have satisfactorily performed the task which is now necessarily executed with incompleteness. My office has been limited to selection, arrangement, and correction of proofs. I should not have felt justified in venturing upon any but indispensable alterations, even though I might have fancied that my friend would have concurred in my suggested emendations.

I hope it will not be esteemed impertinent, if I take upon myself to say that I think highly of many of these poems. Not only are they, in my opinion, sometimes faulty in form, and still more frequently wanting in finish—two qualities she professed not to rate very highly—but, what is singular, they likewise occasionally lack melodiousness, upon which she laid great stress in estimating the work of others. But they have all the essentials of poetry. Poetry is thought completely fused in the crucible of feeling, and by one and the same operation wrought into metrical form. Now, what was most remarkable even in the ordinary conversation of Isa Blagden, and, I may add, what was exceedingly tantalising to the merely positive order of mind, was that she appeared incapable of thought apart from feeling. To me, as I believe to most of her acquaintances, it was her characteristic charm. Anybody less sentimental, in the depreciatory sense of that epithet, never existed; but she poured around the commonest matter an atmosphere of sentiment, or, more strictly speaking, of feeling, which appeared to set it in a fuller light, and to give it completeness, robbing it always of its naked hardness, and not unfrequently of its blunt injustice. It was a faculty which the judicious always envied her, even though it sometimes made her appear inconsistent, or, at least, inconsequent; a result at which we need not wonder, seeing how the reconciliation of things equally true, as of persons equally good, is in this world now and then an impossible task, even to that catholic

charity of which her heart was a never-failing fountain. To all such charges of inconsistency or inconsequence she was merrily insensible, and would close an argument in which, from the mere syllogistic point of view, she had perhaps not emerged a victor, with two or three rapid nods of the head, and the exclamation, "Ah! well!" as though she were addressing her own breast, and appealing to a grandly illogical but truly celestial tribunal within. I remember well holding a controversy with her on one of those subjects that dip into the inner life, as we sat among the roses and the vines, a few days before our dear Florence held its sixth centenary of the birth of Dante. We differed; she failed to convince me, and I failed equally to shake her. Finally, she enunciated something I did not even understand, and I said so frankly. "Never mind," she replied, "you will understand it some day." And she was right. Alas! she can reprove us thus wisely and quietly—no more.

This ever-present, ever-flowing feeling, which was the main charm of her conversation, seems to me to be strikingly noticeable—though I almost think in a slightly less degree, probably because we naturally expect to find it there—in her poetry. She is resolutely on the side of the angels. Yet she soars into no ethereal region. Her Muse walks the familiar world of human passion and suffering, illumining the journey with the light of a compassionate lantern lit at heavenly lamps. Her creed is the old one of the valley of tears that leads to

the celestial mountain ; yet she is far from being alien to joy. In the supreme and exhilarating beauty of the material world she revels like “the shrill cicale, people of the pine,” the sound of whose light-hearted chirrup was so grateful to her ears. In no one I have ever known were joyousness, that special appanage of the ancient world, and melancholy, that heavy inheritance of modern times, so evenly and equitably blended. All that was most precious in Pagan feeling, and all that is most sacred in Christian sentiment, were absorbed and assimilated by her nature. She had a thoroughly sensuous soul ; an eye, ear, heart, exquisitely alive to beauty of sound and scent, of sky, mountain, sea, city, or human face. She gloried in the gorgeous apparel of the external world, just as—many will remember—she delighted in bright textures and vivid colours for female adornment. Indeed, could her innate tastes have been thoroughly indulged, she would have striven to add to Greek beauty of form an oriental splendour of decoration. She exulted in all that could boast the vital power of loveliness. You never met her but she was full of some fresh subject of enthusiasm—a book, a countenance, or some natural prospect. I have heard more than one of her friends describe her as bird-like ; and even a stranger would have found something apt in the comparison, by reason of her singularly small figure and sprightly manner. But I suspect that what really suggested the idea was the completeness of her accord with surrounding nature, and more especially with the scenery

that girt her Tuscan home. She had, indeed, the wings of the bird; surely she had the voice; and truly may I add, she had the fond brooding breast.

This was the beautiful Pagan side of her, that found full space and scope in Italy, that second and greater Greece, and which sought expression in two especially of the poems in this collection—"The Invitation," and "Wild Flowers." But whilst she was conspicuously endowed with those light-seeking gifts and qualities which Christianity, and Protestant Christianity more especially, has shown itself rather too eager to put under a bushel, hers no less, and in a no less striking degree, were those virtues that do good by stealth, and which Christianity has so justly exalted; the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, as opposed to the Pagan gifts and fruits of the flesh,—love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith. Thus, while she had in no degree rejected the precious inheritance bequeathed to us by sub-Olympian times, but gave witness in a thousand ways that great Pan is not dead, she was pre-eminently the child, too, of the Christian era, and was thus, in very truth, the heir of all the ages. For she was a Christian in every sense of the word; by her adherence to its creed, though always, be it understood, in its most catholic and comprehensive form, but still more by her steady and cheerful exercise of the virtues it especially inculcates. Inexhaustible patience and resignation to her own sufferings, inexhaustible sympathy and help for the afflictions of others, boundless toleration



for their weaknesses and boundless forgiveness for their sins,—these were the credentials which proved her a disciple of the divine teaching of the Galilean Lake. Many, indeed, of her intimate friends sat apart, in the terse language of Mr Tennyson, “holding no form of creed, but contemplating all.” But so large was her own interpretation of doctrines which easily lend themselves to narrow and exclusive views, that her belief seemed almost to comprehend their inability and refusal to accept it; and, of a certainty, it never caused the faintest shadow of alienation or division to intervene between herself and any human being. For, after all, practical benevolence was her Religion. She united with the sensuous love of sounds that are quite independent of man’s condition and fortunes, of the song of birds, of the ripple of streams, of the tumbling of torrents, of the roll of the sullen thunder, the finest moral ear for “the still sad music of humanity.” She was attuned to every possible note of wail, and answered it with quick-throbbing sympathy. No matter what might be at the moment her own occupations, her own plans, or the demands of her own interest, she quitted them on the instant at the invitation of helplessness. She was always under arms at the call of compassion. She worked hard, and lived, in great measure, by the exercise of her pen; but neither absorption in the task, nor what others would have deemed the absolute necessity of not being interrupted till it was completed, delayed her step for a second when it was summoned to the

bedside of suffering. I well remember how busy she was in the spring of 1865, yet with what alacrity she assisted me, weary after seven months even of the streets of Florence, to bivouac in an unfurnished villa outside the Porta Romana, and not far from the Villa Giglione she herself then tenanted; lending or finding me linen, plate, and crockery, and pressing into the service the handsome barefooted daughters of the Podere that adjoined it, one of whom used to compute the length of time one's eggs for breakfast should be left in boiling water, by counting two hundred beats of her pulse. No sooner had she established me in this somewhat primitive mode of life, than she was summoned into the city to tend Theodosia Trollope in what proved to be the last days of her long but only too early decline; I quickly following, and taking up my abode in the Villino Trollope, in order to aid in distracting from his bereavement my valued friend, the well-known author of 'The History of the Commonwealth of Florence.' I cannot but think that it will be agreeable to Mr Browning, if I also record that she performed the same pious offices for his illustrious wife, England's, indeed the world's greatest poetess; and that she was bound to both of them by the ties of the warmest affection, admiration, and regard.

These two qualities which we have called respectively Pagan and Christian,—qualities which the unwise imagine to be conflicting, but which the understanding know to be the completion one of the other,—are reflected as fully in Isa Blagden's poems as they were

in her life. If she had written only those seven exquisite sonnets, to be found at pages 93-97 of this volume, and which she entitled the "Seven Chords of the Lyre," such would have been equally the case, and I should equally have been able to claim for her the character and dignity of a true poet. Mark with what subtlety yet distinctness of touch she strikes the first chord! What is it? Aspiration: aspiration for a beneficent activity which shall have its guerdon on earth and in heaven, by spanning both with the arch of Fame. What is the second? Love: love that is described as transfiguring the whole being, making the arid to bloom, the dark places to shine, even as the moon does, when it arises, on the earth. What is the third? Joy: joy that treads the shore of the blest isles, and that holds love's lilies in its clasp. Can the notes of delight and exultation ascend higher? Alas! they have touched the topmost height; and here for a moment they pause, ere the decrescendo movement begins. The fourth sonnet—the fourth of the Seven Chords of the Lyre—is Doubt; doubt described as

" Malignant asp, more envious than the cloud  
That sears the glories of the summer sky,  
And brings foul tempests where was golden calm !"

doubt that defeatureth the beauty of that soft domain, and "wars with love, till love itself depart." And now note with what exquisite accuracy of touch and estimation, with what penetration into the finer facts of life, with what fulfilment of the Pagan creed of delight by the

new dispensation of Christian grief and patience, she balances and completes the chords of Aspiration, Love, and Joy, which hang on the sunny side of Doubt, with those of Sorrow, Endurance, and Faith, which compose and weigh down the other. Through Sorrow, which gives out perfume, even as does trampled grass—through Endurance, which would blush to be weaker than the lone star, which looks forth singly on a dark world—she attains the goal of Faith ; and with this soft, yet confident cadence, she closes the strain :

“ Know that the soul which breathes immortal breath,  
Stronger than joy, stronger than grief, must be,  
And trample both, to reach, O God, to Thee ! ”

Apart from the literary merits of these sonnets—and they appear to me, more especially the sonnet “Endurance,” to be not unworthy of Wordsworth—they are of special value to us as embodying her view of life, of the relations of God and man, of earth and heaven. They are the beautiful epitome of her Creed ; and all she ever said, did, or wrote, buttress this central edifice of her soul. The same doctrine is inculcated in the remarkable poem on the interview which once took place between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Georges Sand, and which wrung from the former two memorable sonnets. We find it again in “The Angels of Life ;” and it is writ small, and with a pretty quaint conceit, in the lines on “My Monogram :”

“ Circles of love and of pleasure,  
Barred by a cross of flame,

Unite, and divide, and measure,  
 The letters which form my name.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Through yearning, fruition, and loss,  
 To make duty my goal and my aim,  
 As the circles are held in the cross !  
 My life's motto is writ in my name."

The first impression of life is that it was made for joy. That is the impression of the child. The second impression is, that it was made for joy, through love. That is the impression of youth, which some fortunate natures retain through early manhood. Then comes the terrible discovery that joy, even if found, and so found, is not permanent. Then the road of life which we all traverse thus far together, divides into two branches, one of which tempts with its cynical simulations of real happiness, and the other of which is plainly marked "sorrow and duty," but which holds out the promise of a celestial bourne of eternal calm. It is narrow and long, this last ; and few there are that find it. It was found, and resolutely travelled to the end, by the impassioned but pious authoress of these poems, wherein the solemn journey is faithfully mirrored. Let us devoutly hope that she was not moving on footsore to a mirage ; yet even were that so, I cannot doubt that she chose the better part. But it should never be forgotten that such a choice, though comparatively easy to the compounds of clay and locomotive power, whom we call men and women, is superlatively arduous to the ex-

ceptional few with whom Love is a consuming passion, and Genius an unquenchable torch. The subject of this memoir had a joy-loving frame, a throbbing soul, and a soaring mind. She combined in herself the qualities both of Martha and of Mary, and she superadded to these the prodigal tenderness of Magdalen without her errors. This is the supremest praise that can be given to a woman ; but those who knew Isa Blagden know that I do not exaggerate.

She first settled in Florence in 1849, and that fairest and fullest spot of Earth was her adopted home till the day of her death. Nay, she resides there still, under the spiral cypress-shadow which stretches athwart the tombs of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Theodosia Trollope. Thus she was present at the entombment of Italy's hopes of liberty and unity at the close of one decade, and at their glorious and final resurrection towards the close of the next. She even lived to see Rome delivered, and raised to its proper dignity as the capital of the new Kingdom. As her poems testify, she took the warmest interest in the fortunes of the beautiful and now prosperous land. But there was one drop of bitterness reserved for her share in the political exultation so many of us have felt. Like Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose sentiments are recorded in the 'Poems Before Congress,' she entertained an enthusiastic admiration for Napoléon III., which many friends of Italy shared but in marked moderation, and some did not share at all. In the days of that monarch's pros-

perity, it was all very well for us to turn her portrait of him with his face to the wall, as the best mode of notifying to her that we had called at the Villa Giglione or the Villa Castellani—she moved to the latter in 1868—and had not found her at home. But when the famous *points noirs* began to show themselves on the imperial horizon, it became necessary to treat the subject with gravity; and when, finally, the Second Empire disappeared amid the smoke and surrender of Sedan, it had to be avoided altogether. I grieve to think that so loving and generous a soul should have experienced real grief from what I cannot but regard as a well-merited catastrophe. That it caused her suffering deep and long, I know; and it is certainly remarkable that her own death, almost a sudden one, should have occurred immediately after the announcement of that of the Emperor. The last lines she ever wrote were on that event; and they are omitted from this volume, not only because the poem was left incomplete, but because I have found much of it, even as far as it goes, quite undecipherable.

Though Italy was the land of her adoption, she entertained so warm a love for her English friends, that she visited this country as often as she could afford to do so. But, as she used to say, it took her three years to get her finances in order again, after such an indulgence. But even whilst here, her heart was at Bellosguardo; and, as Byron makes Dante say in his exile she

“ . . . Envied every dove its nest and wings  
That waft her where the Apennine looks down  
On Arno.”

One year when she visited us, she brought with her her Italian maid, Irene, a handsome wild creature, who spent the days in singing Tuscan *stornelli*, and munching yet unripe apples in our Kentish orchard. The two little poems, already alluded to, of “Wild Flowers” and “The Invitation,” express even with scarcely sufficient ardour the feeling of exultation and delight with which her face was ever turned from the Northern Sea to

“ Opal tints on hill and plain,  
Lithe green reeds with lifted spear,  
Purple grapes 'mid ripening grain.”

Her own abode in the Villa Castellani, modest as it comparatively was, invariably filled one with admiration and envy, whether by reason of its commodiousness, the beauty and retirement of its pretty garden, the excellence of its site, or the unequalled glory of its prospect. On one side was Florence itself, that dream in marble; on the other, the broad middle valley of the Arno, every rood of it visible to the eye even to where it narrows into the defile of La Golfina, fat with centuries of industrious yet beautiful cultivation, and studded with fair campanili and villas,

“ Par che il terren ve le germogli come  
Vermene germogliar suole e rampolli; ”

a plain, which “to look on is to love.” There she wrote her poems, and cultivated her anemones and tulips tall,



her sweet verbenas, her roses, and against the walls her vines ; imprisoning the sunshine in the long oval muscat-flavoured grapes, and loving to garner the huge bunches till some friend from England arrived to be cured of the vulgar notion that hothouse grapes are finer or more luscious than any grown in the open air between the Alps and the sea. How well I remember climbing a ladder, she the while steadying it—for it was monstrously rickety, as such things are apt to be in Italy—bringing down from the rafters of an outhouse the bunches she had stored so long, and helping her to bear them in triumph to some sceptical Britons. For nothing delighted her so much as hospitality, and she exercised it with a constant but ever unpretentious liberality. So large and comprehensive was her own humanity, that she would sometimes make the mistake of bringing fire and water together, and yet expecting them to fuse. Yet she herself possessed some secret charm, which enabled her to fuse equally well with either. She was a living disproof of Gay's aphorism, that a favourite has no friends. She was a universal favourite ; and no firmer band of friends ever surrounded man or woman. Though she had all the gifts which we usually associate with a recluse, she was entirely without the moroseness or exclusiveness which often accompanies that character. She was remarkably fond of society, and there was not a house in Florence or its neighbourhood where she was not the most welcome of guests. I had the happiness of first making her acquaintance in a ball-room in that city,

though she had then for some time ceased to be among the dancers. She had that "non so chè" which attracted everybody to her, high and low, young and old, distinguished and obscure, ambitious and meek, alike. It was rarely that any one of consequence in the world of letters or of art paid ever so short a visit to Florence without making her acquaintance; and whether English, French, Germans, or Americans touched her threshold, the same genial "salve" greeted them. She never seemed to suffer from either of those two disastrous diseases of modern social life—*ennui* or boredom; and her patience with stupid people made one ashamed. But with truly congenial spirits her wit was delightful, her sprightliness irresistible, her conversational fervour inexhaustible. The news, "Isa is coming," invariably filled with an almost childlike delight a certain Florence circle, whose members are now, alas! scattered to the four cold winds. She never departed without leaving a blank.

Nor was the tenderness of her heart limited to her own species. I might say that she turned her house into a hospital for dogs, were it not that none of them were, in any sense of the word, invalids. But they had been dogs in distress at some period or other, and their misery had caused her first acquaintance with, and final adoption of them. I remember her writing to me in 1866, after a visit she had paid to Venice, and in the letter she described how she had rescued a poor poodle from the clutches of some boys, who, after shaving it till it resem-

bled a white rat, were about to drown it in the Grand Canal. She took it back to Florence with her, and christened it after the Queen of the Adriatic; "and thus," she added, "I hear Venezia, Venezia, all day long." Another member of the canine saved, a truly friendly fellow, was christened "Keeley, or the low comedian," from his singularly unaristocratic, not to say comic appearance. A highly unpopular member of her dog community was "Teddie," who snapped at the whole world except its dear mistress, and seemed to be of Conrad's opinion when addressing Medora, "I cease to love thee, when I love mankind." One year when she spent the hot summer months at the Bagni di Lucca, she made the entire journey at considerable expense, by *vetturino*, because the "Livorno-Empoli-Firenze" railway line would not allow her to have her dogs in the railway carriage with her; and her description of the journey in a private letter, written at the time, was humorously descriptive of the intelligent companionship she had chosen. It was her wish that, whenever she died, her dogs should be saved by an easy euthanasia from the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," which she felt sure would befall them in less considerate keeping.

Her habitual cheerfulness, that finest and most beneficent form of social charity, and which invariably beamed out from her at the sight of a human being, doubtless screened from the world at large, as it was only meet it should, the cloud of heavenly melancholy which, as any one who reads her poems attentively will perceive,

largely veiled her life. Her spirits were too finely touched for her existence to be altogether a happy one ; yet she was far too noble to seem to be unhappy. She turned out a silver lining on the night, though pain and oftentimes gloom shrouded her soul within. "Life," she said to a friend, when she was in England last year, "is one long disappointment." No doubt the words were uttered in a mood of exceptional depression, but on the whole they expressed the speaker's mind. I record them with no hesitation or scruple, for they need not trouble those who knew Isa Blagden. She did not, like some people, insist on her right to be happy, or accuse the Divine Government when the claim was not allowed. As she understood life and its conditions, pain, sorrow, and disappointment necessarily play an important part in it. She relished joy as few can ever have relished it ; but when the wings were not permitted to exult, the breast was resigned, and she usually found in ministering to the wounds of others a more than partial forgetfulness of her own. Châteaubriand has observed that sorrow is the strongest pledge of our immortality ; and in Isa Blagden's heart the two things were steadily associated. But I know that she wished much to survive, spiritually also, on this side of the dark line ; and I cherish the hope that there may lurk something in this little volume which will perpetuate and gratify her yearning.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

P O E M S



## THE STORY OF TWO LIVES.

---

### I.—HIS LIFE.

[*Scene—An English Park. Time—Evening.*]

My long deep swoon is o'er—I dimly feel  
These palsied senses wake ; and now, the wheel  
Of Time, so long fast-locked, revolves again,—  
Again I live through all that past of pain :  
Regret and longing, shame, resentment, pride,  
Conscience—too long suppressed, too oft defied—  
Unite to sting me ; every writhing nerve  
Thrills into torture, till my senses swerve  
Perplexed and racked. Life founders in the shock ;  
The mast is down . . . the ship has struck a rock.

When first this terror all my soul o'ercame,  
I sate with her, the lady of my name.  
'Mid this convulsion of all Time and Space  
How strange to think of that familiar face !  
The haughty features and the large bright eyes,  
So keenly steadfast in their cold surprise.  
Her jewelled fingers, white and thin, turned o'er  
The journal of the day—no more ! no more !  
- It all returns, the words are burning here,  
And fall like molten lead upon my ear.

She read with languid, slow, indifferent tone,  
Calm as a child, who throws in, one by one,  
Pebbles, deep down into some mighty lake,  
Reckless what stormy echoes they may wake.  
Sudden she spoke, half pity, half disdain—  
“ Poor thing, how much she must have borne of pain !  
Found dead, none knew her home, her name, her  
age ;  
One of those outcasts ! ” . . . rustled here the page,  
Scorned by the dainty hand, the proud lip curled  
As she read on : “ Poor outcast of the world !  
If killed by grief, disease, or hunger, none  
Would ever know, for she had died, alone ;



But one poor relic, in her hand held fast,  
This squalid misery with some brighter past  
Must once have bound — a soiled, torn heron's  
plume." . . .

God! what white Presence shivered through the room?  
"How strangely pale you look! are you not well?"  
She rose and left me.

Ah! what bell

Was that she touched that rang so sharp a sound,  
Vibrating down the walls, and from the ground,  
Louder and louder till it clove my brain,  
Which throbbed and throbbed, and echoed it again?  
Who groaned? Not I—I firmly laid my hand  
Upon a chair; I could each pulse command.  
But why should all things glow with sudden fire,  
Or fade in sudden darkness? why require  
To grope my way around by sense of touch,  
As if I could not trust my sight as much?  
Did no accusing phantom enter there,  
Shadowy, impalpable, yet deathly fair?  
Could those few words, read in that smooth, chill tone  
Root up my being—leave it all o'erthrown?  
And o'er the ruin did an angel come,  
And roll away the stone from my heart's tomb?

I had, methought, bridged o'er my young despair—  
I dreamed my prosperous manhood had no share  
In that vain past—the records of that day  
Hid (fool to think so) with that past away !  
But memory lives wherever has been guilt—  
The stain remains where'er the wine is spilt !  
And though so hushed and still the present seemed  
At times beneath its wave, strange shadows gleamed :  
- I looked with more of self-contempt than pain,  
And proudly turned to busy life again.  
All soft emotions I have long repress—  
What need of garlands on a mailed breast ?  
So best ; so marble hard my heart has grown  
That what was foliage once, is now but stone,  
Life petrified to flint. But what shines there ?  
Why do I tremble thus ? Art still so fair ?  
Woman ! did I love *thee* ? Speak—speak ! was thine  
That death she read of ? was that love-gift mine ?  
That heron-plume ! are these the eyes, the mouth  
Whose wooing sweetness passion-filled my youth ?  
Why dost thou rise before me thus ? Adored,  
Thy bare white arm uplifted as a sword,  
What seek'st thou at my hands ? was't not a Fate—  
Betrayed, undone—did Love wrong more than Hate ?

We loved. She was an orphan, poor and young,  
My mother's ward ; we to each other clung,  
Playmates for years in yon dark ancient hall.  
We loved, were parted, who dares blame our fall ?  
I bore a wealthy, old, patrician name,  
My mother swore it should be kept from shame ;  
She thrust her from my side. Forgive me, Sweet !  
Would God that day I perished at thy feet !

Time passed, and with it love. Alas ! since then  
My life has been as lives of other men :  
Pleasure and pride, ambition, some success,  
And a heart flattered into selfishness.  
The past I soon forgot, as all men can :  
Didst thou ? but thou wert woman ; I a man.

And once again we met ; pearls gemmed thy hair,  
Thy wasted cheek was pale, but yet how fair !  
Doubting and eager, in thy hollow eyes  
Methought I saw a struggling memory rise.  
I turned away. " Thank Heaven," I said, " I'm free,  
I have outgrown that weakness." Pharisee !  
Because I flung a flower upon the road  
For other men to trample—I thanked God !

Less sullied thou in body, soul, and heart,  
Than I, who acted the self-righteous part ;  
Better the impulse of some warm, wild sin  
Than the world's mildew, rotting all within ;  
Better a torrid than an arctic sky ;  
Better a fever than a leprosy !

I sought once more my old ancestral hall ;  
All was so changed, it dared no ghosts recall.  
Where the impassioned boy ? the gentle girl ?  
There stood my bride, the daughter of an earl.  
All praised the decent order of my life,  
My graceful children, and my stately wife.  
None saw but I, that where my daughters played,  
There stood among them an appealing shade ;  
None knew that where their girlish voices sung,  
A softer music in my ears had rung.  
Yon woods glare vengeful red in day's decline,  
For there, a young bright life was poured like wine !

When from the church pealed loud the hour of  
prayer,  
I entered with a self-applauding air ;

Observance of these rites to God is due,  
My station claims my presence in my pew ;  
I doubt the dogma, but respect the form,  
Nor yawn unless the tedious day be warm.  
I gravely hear of life, of sin, of death,  
And sanction give to Him of Nazareth :  
Religion is a social state machine ;  
A fence to keep the untutored herd within.  
I listen, and I hear unmoved the doom—  
“ Woe, woe to him through whom offences come ! ”

But now the frozen surface of the stream  
Breaks wide ; below, the heaving waters gleam.  
How quietly I have recalled all this,  
And yet, between me and this Past there is  
A murdered Life ! What is it that I feel ?  
I think I swooned, and still my senses reel.  
What chance divorced me from my Life ? upturn  
From all which made my life until this morn.  
I rushed into the air exhausted, spent ;  
My wife, saw she I staggered as I went ?  
My stainless wife, that she should live to have  
A husband weeping o'er a wanton's grave !

But why, if thou wert vile, and lost, and weak,  
Should I thus suffer? I adjure thee, speak!  
Here must have been some early warp towards  
    sin,

And soon or late the self-same course had been.  
Had we not loved the end had been the same . . .  
Ah no! that lie is burnt out as with flame.  
'Twas I who sinned, 'twas I who failed thy  
    trust;

I the forsworn, the perjured, false, unjust;  
On me the guilt of thy betrayal lies;  
I led thy virtue down the slope to vice.  
Am I at last to this conviction brought?  
What fearful horror in that damning thought!  
The pseudo-virtues which I claim as mine,  
My cold decorums, and the bigot line  
By which I nicely gauged all human act—  
Shrivel before the terror of this fact.  
Large is my ruin, utter and complete,  
The world's vain creeds are ashes at my feet.  
I tear this grass, I fling it to the sky,  
My hollow faith, its paltry forms defy—  
I blaspheme God, and Fate, and Man, and all,  
Because she fell as such must ever fall.

I glance on high at yon relentless heaven,  
Its stern attesting witness has been given,  
And there is sentence in its silence. Where  
Obtain remission from my doubts? The air  
Is void of answer; all is still; no sound  
Save ripe loose acorns rustling to the ground  
With sudden, muffled, fall . . . and, hark! a song  
Borne faintly by the echoes. While among  
The wild dark coverts of this haunted wood  
I've crept to die, by vengeful shades pursued,  
My wife is singing in our home; so wide  
The fate-drawn rifts which soul from soul divide.  
Strange, how those notes seem searching to be heard,  
Ringing and sharp, like dagger-thrusts, each word;  
Strange, too, how that clear crystal voice of hers  
Chills the fond pathos of the quaint old verse:  
"Youth, Love, and Death," persistently repeat  
The echoes that refrain, "Sweet, angel sweet."  
Must then the inexorable third come in,  
Where'er the first their Orphic rhyme begin?—  
Alas! that concord—one poor life fulfilled,  
That mournful sequence one poor heart has stilled;  
And I am hastening to the self-same fate,  
I break the tardy hinges of the gate.

Await me Love ! enfranchised on that shore,  
The world's false claims assert their rule no more !  
I dare not live. I dare not once again  
Fold round my soul those weary bonds of pain,  
And, with a hideous mockery, resume  
My life of yore—a dead man from the tomb.  
My voice sounds strangely for familiar speech—  
And how through these remorseful spasms reach  
The polished jargon, which must be the food  
Of worldly needs. I would not if I could !

I dare not now deceive myself ; I know  
I never loved her as I love her now.  
I love her with her shame ; I love her sin ;  
Not the pure child who first my love did win,  
But the lost woman, fallen, desperate,  
Brute passion's hireling slave, the purchased mate  
Of villains, and of fools, a mark for scorn ;  
Not the white flower which from my youth was  
torn,  
But the poor ravaged weed, which I flung down  
To be a byword for the virtuous town.  
I try to image thee as thou wert then ;  
I see thee, prey and toy of dastard men.



Was that soft, golden hair all faded, dim?  
Did those poor eyelids, 'neath their swollen rim,  
Lose the arch sweetness of that bending curve  
Which gave those eyes their delicate reserve?  
Was it all marred and broke, that tender line  
Of the small throat, so soft, so white, so fine?  
How impotent is Life! I would give all—  
My fair possessions, and my ancient hall,  
My stainless name, the world's so just esteem,  
All that my pride could hope, ambition's dream—  
To wander through some lawless misery,  
Forlorn, and homeless, and outcast . . . with  
    Thee!  
To clasp once more the form upon that bed,  
In its soiled rags. My God! found dead, found  
    dead!

Night's darkness gathers o'er the accusing skies,  
The boding stars await a sacrifice—  
I must arise from this damp tear-stained ground,  
Where all my life seems bleeding through one  
    wound.  
I would each pang were prelude of disease,  
Some fierce and mortal fever, which should seize

Me, sweeping onwards with its fatal power.  
Too late, too late, I have lived o'er that hour—  
By my own hand I've sworn to die—(what shout  
Of devil mirth)—my sin has found me out.

I pause ; I would not startle from her nest  
Yon timid bird, low hovering to her rest,  
Low calling to her young and to her mate—  
- I *now* know pity, tenderness—too late  
Dost thou assert thyself. Oh, broken heart !  
Oh mad ! oh fool ! oh blind ! thou wert, thou art.

Still there : nay look not on me thus, Adored !—  
Thy bare white arm uplifted as a sword,—  
With all that questioning sorrow and despair.  
Those eyes wild weeping, loosely streaming hair—  
That death in life, that terror, that surprise,  
As on that day of parting sacrifice.  
Through Time, through Space, through all Eternity,  
Must I still hear that wild, remorseful cry—  
It speaks my doom, e'en as I reach the goal,  
It is my curse—" Oh man, restore my soul !"

## II.—HER LIFE.

[*Scene—A London Street. Time—Evening.*]

I wander up into the crowded street,  
I hear the rolling wheels, the busy feet,  
I see the misty rings, round lamps, which shine  
Far in the distance, as a double line  
Of clouded brightness, piercing night's dim track,  
(Glittering like nails upon a coffin black)—  
And am no more afraid, for life is here ;  
Below, I am alone, with Death and Fear.

How oft I've paused, when all was not yet o'er,  
Where yon red globes, above the druggist's door,  
Warned me that I could enter in, and find  
The cheaply purchased end of all ; unbind  
This chain of life, which then held strong and fast—  
I now can wait ; that guilty wish has passed.

The air revives me, and I lose the dread  
Which haunts me when alone. When I am dead

I shall not be more lone and still than there,  
 In that damp cellar gloom—no fire, no air—  
 Although, so near, the gaudy, reckless town  
 In its triumphant life heaves up and down.

I always feared the darkness as a child.  
 A child? could *I* have ever been a child?  
 Light-hearted, innocent, and glad and free?  
 - One such long since I knew . . . was she like me?  
 Did I love snowdrops, and the lambs in spring?  
 The little birds, each soft and helpless thing?  
 I could be gentle then . . . ah me! how strange,  
 These thoughts rise, now, to torture and avenge!  
 They say that drowning men can thus recall  
 Their whole lives through, as sinking, slow, they  
     fall;  
 Are the wild waters closing o'er my head,  
 That thus I see the Past before me spread?  
 I see the terrace gleaming in the sun,  
 The golden plain ere reaping was begun,  
 The church-tower hid beneath close ivy sheaves,  
 The pigeons fluttering o'er the moss-grown eaves,  
 The garden bright, with summer's sweetest flowers,  
 Its quaint pleached walks, its gold laburnum bowers;

I see the jasmine's white and dainty graces,  
Black hollyhocks, with laughing negro-faces,  
The red geranium's ardent crest of flame,  
And mignonnette, from which he took my name . . .  
I see a girl amid those flowers at play—  
A boy is near—two human buds, whose May  
Has ripened with the flowers—both, how fair !  
Was he the boy ? was I the girl, who there  
Stood hand in hand ? Then did that road begin  
Which led from Eden to a world of sin.

My parents served his mother. From their grave  
She took me to her home, and swore to save  
My life from all their lives, she said, had borne.  
Oh, better had I lived as poor, forlorn  
As thou, my mother ; better on thy bier  
Had I been slain, than sent to perish there !  
The lady kept me in her ancient hall  
(There was my Paradise, and there my fall)  
Until she found her son dared love me—then  
She banished me. He followed, and again  
She came between us. Did I love or hate  
When I sent back her bounty ? Oh, too late

I felt remorse, and grief, and shame, and scorn—  
The veil was rent, the fond illusion torn !

Oh, not to share in innocence and ease,  
But only for bare life, on bended knees  
I prayed for service, work ; but hunted, tossed,  
From depth to depth, the world proclaimed me  
lost.

'Twas sin to be a coward as I was ;  
*I was afraid to starve* ; I thought the laws  
Were harsh and stern ; men spoke of prisons, or  
Would mocking point where frowned the workhouse  
door,

But none gave help. Oh, in that fearful coil  
Which like a whirlpool sucked me in, I know  
Each phase of suffering, from the wretched toil  
Which keeps out Death, but gives not Life : to sew  
Whole days, whole nights ; week after week to  
seam

Till walls and floors whirl round as in a dream ;  
To that despair which finds even this withdrawn . . .  
“ Some ebb in trade.” Oh, why are women born !  
After long years I saw him once again,  
I was so stunned, I scarcely felt the pain ;

I trembled not, but, calm, I met his eye,  
Which scanned me through, and yet I did not die.  
No love was in my life, I learned "to smile  
Beneath the gas," my heart all cold the while ;  
Deaf, dumb, and blind, a prey to passions rude ;  
Alas ! I had no home, no bed, no food !

I strove to 'scape from this accursed state  
One dismal eve, I stood beside a gate,  
It was a "Refuge," and I trembling rung . . .  
"No room—all full ;" the iron portal swung,  
And I was left without—and that hope died—  
In vain three more, my weary footsteps tried :  
At last the workhouse.\* Oh my God ! the shame,  
The Board of Guardians and their cruel blame ;  
The terrors of those cells, that dread dark ward,  
Its jeering blasphemies, its vice ignored,  
Ungessed, by even such as I till then . . .  
Is there a lower Hell ? Yet righteous men  
Have dreamed that here was refuge, peace, reform,  
A shelter from the world's inclement storm.  
Herded together, ruled by gyve and rope,  
Evil grew rampant, evil with no hope

\* *Vide* 'Uncommercial Traveller.'

Here or hereafter, strong enough to save  
The soul alive in that unresting grave !

I know not how I left, or where I went,  
All impulse, courage, energy, were spent—  
Warped as by fire, both age and sex effaced,  
(That lava holds no trace of woman's breast),  
I lost all shame ; I robbed—or begged for food,  
- And "homeless 'mid a thousand homes I stood."

How oft beneath the vast and echoing arch,  
Which strides across the river's stately march,  
I've crawled to lay my weary hopeless head,  
While loud above I heard the City's tread !  
With sinking pulse, and dizzy, swimming brain,  
Torn by stiff aching cramps, and racked with pain,  
Haunted by feverish dreams, while far below,  
Lulling, and cool, I heard the waters flow—  
A moment to feel tempted, then to shrink  
Back, back from that beguiling, awful, brink ;  
The start—recoil—the tottering to one's feet—  
Once more, once more, into the hideous street,  
Blindly to grope back into life anew . . .  
Father, forgive, we know not what we do !



As I one night was pacing to and fro,  
A woman met and spoke to me ; though low  
Her voice, her words had power to probe, yet heal,  
Mild, yet incisive, bright and strong as steel.  
She told me she had been to the far East,  
Had traced the steps of each Evangelist—  
Had stood where once stood wide the Temple  
door,  
And where our Jesus spoke, “Go, sin no more.”\*  
One eve, she said, as slow the sun went down,  
She saw, as there she paused and mused alone,  
A shepherd, bearing back into the fold  
A little yearling lamb, all starved and cold,  
And tired and bleeding, for its truant feet  
Had rambled from green paths and meadows sweet  
Until it reached the Dead Sea’s bitter wave,  
Where the foul waters fouler deserts lave ;  
But there it had been found, and thence brought  
home  
With gentlest care and love—“Thus God says come,  
To you ; will you not come, my child ? for see,  
The same Good Shepherd seeks for you and me.”

\* *Vide* ‘Cities of the Past.’

Her outstretched hand upheld me for a time.  
I found a service. Was it such a crime  
That I concealed my past—my present state  
From all my former guilt to separate?  
Some old companions found me; whence I came  
Was thus betrayed; they called me by my name,  
And I stood helpless—for that name was known—  
The door was shut, and I was bid “begone!”

I was not worse than others. Through my tears  
I heard a cry which told of sharper fears—  
A cry more wild and desperate than my own.  
I saw a girl flung down upon a stone,  
Sobbing with fright—I almost feared to speak,  
But went towards her; and she raised a meek  
And tear-stained face, with pleading, clinging trust—  
“Oh! will you help me?” What a stormy gust  
Of wrath and hatred rose within me then  
'Gainst all this rigid world of righteous men!  
Outcasts and homeless—here, two human lives  
Were left to perish; yet these men had wives  
And sisters; little girls upon their knee . . .  
But have no pity; must she end like me?

She was an orphan, by the parish placed  
With a bad mistress, artful, vile, unchaste,  
Who had ill-treated, starved her, then had bid  
Her do, with drunken oaths, *what others did*.  
She had refused, had been thrust out, and now  
She was so frightened, blushes dyed her brow.  
She had a friend—far off—if she could reach  
Her house she would be safe. With timid speech  
She told me this, then pointed to her dress—  
No bonnet—cloak—and she was penniless.  
Her tears fell faster—“ I must beg,” she said ;  
“ I know not where to-night to lay my head.”  
I gave her the poor trifle I had saved ;  
My shawl I gave her ; I too long had braved,  
More lightly clad, the winds, the rain, the night,  
To fear them now. Her pure child’s face shone  
    bright  
With joy—“ I owe you more than life,” she said.  
“ Tell me your name.” I silent shook my head.  
Then for a moment was that frank young mouth  
Pressed close to mine. Oh God ! how my lost  
    youth  
Rose from its tomb, as those fresh lips pressed mine !  
I drank each kiss as dying men drink wine.

She hastened on, and I, alone once more,  
Felt calm. The bitterness of death was o'er.  
I'd given my all—but she was saved ; for me  
It mattered nought—could I more wretched be ?  
As I thus stood—a sharp and piercing pain  
Shot through my side—again, and once again—  
As if a knife was searching through my breast,  
To find my heart, and give its tumult rest.  
- It passed, and left a sense of dim release,  
I knew that pain was harbinger of peace.

I found a shelter on that very night—  
A cellar loathsome, dark, but with the right  
Of solitude, I need no more ; by day  
I earn, or beg, a trifle, then I stay  
Quite still, exhausted, for long hours—no pain—  
No care—in this last conflict I shall gain.

Sometimes I creep up for a little air,  
As now ; but rarer grows the wish, more rare.  
Some of my old, impatient restlessness  
Stirred in my heart to-night—beneath my dress  
It throbs like a poor hunted thing, which fears,  
And madly still resists the leaguered spears ;

Fights its hard fight for life, as stags, they say,  
Wounded to death, will yet keep death at bay.

And thus I come once more, for air and light,  
It was so piteous in that dreary night ;  
And then, perchance, some kindly passer-by  
Will speak some word to soothe me, ere I die.  
If not, in yon poor street, I think I know  
A friend, to whom undoubting I could go  
For help in this last hour ;—a labouring man  
And poor, but kind, as oft we poor ones can  
Be kind to one another. Though so late,  
He will be working still ; they cannot wait  
Who need his work—his hard, ill-omened trade,  
To make the coffins of the pauper dead.  
'Tis here, the shutter is not closed—I see.  
Let me look in. He's working. By his knee,  
I see her well, in matron-beauty stands  
A woman ; and a baby's tiny hands  
Are clasped around her neck. Could I have been  
A wife and mother ! Oh my God !—what sin  
To murmur now !—all is, and must be, best.  
And yet—and yet—a baby on my breast

Had been a shield secure, a hope, an aim.  
The long-spent ashes kindle into flame  
At the bare thought. Dare I repine at Fate?  
Oh! hush, poor broken heart,—too late, too late!

How wide my thoughts are wandering to-night!  
These three I gaze on dimly in the light,  
Through that small dusty pane—recall to me  
A famous picture of a group of three,  
Seen in that grand old chapel of the Hall,  
Over the altar set, midst tapers tall—  
Painted by Raphael, so the legend saith—  
The Virgin and the Babe of Nazareth.  
This scene recalls that picture—parent love—  
The emblem and the type of God's great Love—  
The glory will fill up my darkness, I,  
Soothed by its sweetness, now, can calmly die.  
I will not enter in—poor friends, I go—  
May God bless both—I need no kind word now.  
I will go down to my dark home again.  
What! do these stiffening fingers still retain  
In their loose hold, this soiled, torn, heron's plume,—  
Pledge of a love that led me to this doom?

“ It was his crest,” he said, which I should wear,  
And laughing placed it waving in my hair ;  
He swore to leave all else, whate’er might be,  
If I but sent that plume, to fly to me.  
I dared not send it.—I am now alone ;  
May God forgive him as I long have done !  
I know there has been wrong, but mine seems  
    worst—

The guilt, the blame, be mine—I have no thirst  
For aught but to forgive, and be forgiven ;  
I cling for mercy to God’s feet—Oh Heaven !—  
How that fair picture deepens in the night !  
I hear a voice—I see a radiant light—  
A hand held out which stills this aching breast—  
“ Come unto me, and I will give you rest.”

## THE INVITATION.

IF I called thee, wouldst thou come,  
Love, across the Northern Sea,  
From thy dark and rugged home  
Back to Italy and me?

Here the sky is blue, intense ;  
Here the Arno's lingering feet  
Blend, with Earth's glad affluence,  
Sounds and sighs of summer sweet.

Here the fireflies wing their flight,  
Pulsing to the magic tune  
Murmured every breathless night  
Through our warm, delicious June.

Here the roses in sweet scorn  
Smile above the rugged wall ;  
Here wave fields of yellow corn  
Lit by poppies, red and tall.



Music here from soft-voiced birds,  
Wild, pathetic, eager song,  
Plaintive as a lute's low chords,  
Piercing as a clarion strong.

Here are vines which clasp and fold  
Rude, bare boughs with tendrils fine ;  
Here are fruits of orient gold,  
Fountains which like rainbows shine.

Melody and fragrance here,  
Opal tints on hill and plain,  
Lithe green reeds with lifted spear,  
Purple grapes 'mid ripening grain.

Beauty's fairest home is here,  
Earth baptised in light and dew.  
Haste, the summer draweth near !  
Haste, where souls are born anew.  
I have called thee, thou wilt come.

## WILD FLOWERS.

PALE apple-blossoms and red flowers,  
Anemones and tulips tall,  
Which light with flaming torch the showers  
Of slim green leaves which round them fall,

Are smiling here, and through the rift  
Of vanished years what thoughts arise,  
As on each glowing bud I lift,  
Dazzled and dim, my wearied eyes.

The sweet-brier fragrance of your youth,  
A wild, free blossom, tender, pure,  
Yet rich with promise (such in truth,  
Ever, to riciest fruit, mature).

The glory of our Tuscan spring,  
Transparent, warm, with bloom divine,  
From leaf and flower and vines which cling  
From tree to tree with tendrils fine.

The teeming splendour of our plain,  
A sea of verdure lost in blue ;  
Our curving hills, the ripening grain,  
With fireflies glittering through and through :

Our old tower \* whence the owls would call  
Oft and again their one sweet note ;  
The wealth of roses on our wall,  
By summer, spring, and autumn brought :

All in this pictured panel lives,  
And like a charm unseals my eyes ;  
A spell divine a fairy weaves,  
To clothe the earth with rainbow dyes.

The moonlight and the sunlight clear,  
The hope, the joy which nature wore,  
Life, youth, and passion, all are here,  
And Italy is mine once more.

\* Hawthorne lived for three months at the Tower of Montauto, Bellosguardo, and there began "Transformation."

## R O M E. 1870.

WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE  
ITALIAN TROOPS INTO ROME.

THERE is a picture I remember well,  
A fresco, fading in my Southern home,  
A woman sleeping on the burning sand,  
While baleful sunset vapours fill the land,  
A type of thee, O Rome !

The slant sun searches for her cheek, and warms  
Its golden brown to amber, till the bee,  
Confused by sweetness, sucks it as a flower.  
No queen, who dreams within her palace bower,  
Is throned more royally.

Above, the blue, far-off, mysterious sky,  
O'ercanopies her grave, majestic head,

And presses her shut eyes, so sadly sweet ;  
The swart Campagna stretches round her feet,  
As 'twere a carpet spread.

Around (bold headlands in that tideless sea)  
Surge awful ruins, prone, august, and hoar,  
Void temples, broken columns, arches vast,  
Where oracles and echoes of the past  
Reverberate evermore !

An empty wallet lies beside her hand,  
A cross defaced hangs on her scarlet vest ;  
Forlorn and poor, she sleeps abandoned there,  
Her face, o'ershadowed by a grand despair,  
Is hushed in mournful rest.

Unconscious of all peril, calm, she sleeps,  
Though soon the treacherous fatal dews will rise  
Which lead from sleep to death ; soft cobweb folds  
Thus bind a captured fly in spider holds,  
Where, crushed, it slowly dies.

The poison murders with a bland caress,  
A sugared venom 'neath which life expires ;

But wake her and she's saved. Is there no name  
Will rouse her from this sleep, as sudden flame  
Is held to smouldering fires ?

Alas, alas ! to me that picture seems  
My country's symbol. Rome, thus fair art thou.  
Dead vampire lips thus fasten on thy breath,  
And beauty deepening into solemn death,  
Thus crowns thy faded brow.

She sleeps 'mid ruins, as thou sleepest, Rome !  
Beneath as subtle, deadly a control ;  
A worse malaria enervates thy will,  
And fate and falsehood both unite to kill,  
To soil and crush thy soul.

But THOU art saved ; loud o'er thy purple hills  
The silence breaks, thy brave deliverers come ;  
Clear as a clarion's note the music falls,  
And nations greet the kingly voice which calls,  
Arise, be free, O Rome !

THE CHURCH OF THE GESÙ.

OFT 'mid the work-day's crowd and heat,  
 The fret and fever, toil and strife,  
 The hollow tumult of the street,  
 I turn to breathe a purer life,  
 To where some temple's sheltering dome,  
 Lies hushed and lone, in marble gloom.

Perchance, all still, my footsteps fall,  
 Arouse the echoes, and they call  
 From arch to arch, with whispering sound,  
 As soft I tread the holy ground.  
 At times an altar glistens far  
 Amid the darkness—tapers dim  
 Mysterious move, and then I hear  
 Some murmured rite, some vesper hymn,  
 Steal on the silence, low and clear ;

Or some confession's soothed despair  
 Melt from its contrite woe to prayer!  
 Or standing near some porphyry shrine,  
 I catch a pale retreating line,  
 A fading glory, parting gleam,  
 From some seraphic-pictured dream,  
 Wherein the painter's art hath given  
 To earth the hues and glow of heaven.

'Twas thus this morn (as from the gay  
 And lightsome throng I turned away),  
 'Mid golden splendour, azure gloom,  
 I sought Ignazio's knightly tomb,  
 Where sleeps the loyal heart who gave  
 Its chivalry to Faith—whose grave,  
 More potent than the Cæsar's throne,  
 Sways with its rule the triple crown!

I crossed the threshold's draperied fold  
 And paused—for, 'stead of silence lone,  
 I saw a gorgeous scene unrolled,  
 I heard the solemn organ's tone.

The shrine, with myriad torches bright,  
 Blaze with a consecrated light—



From fretted roof to pictured wall  
The votive jewels sparkling hung,  
While golden bars of sunshine flung  
Through burnished casements arched and tall,  
Athwart the jasper pillars broad,  
In slanting columns, radiant glowed.

But dark with purple pageantries,  
The solemn nave and massive aisle,  
Crowded with kneeling votaries,  
Even in that flood of light were dim,  
Save where around a new-raised pile,  
Shadowed by wings of cherubim,  
The softened daylight met the glare  
Of fervent lamps, whose fiery ring  
Circled some dark mysterious thing  
Exalt, in shrined silence there.

I drew within, and now could trace,  
Pale 'mid the splendour, a still face,  
A faded brow, a sunken cheek,  
Sad eyes, which yet no tears could shed,  
Sad lips, from which no sighs could break,  
Two upraised hands, 'tween which was laid

A crucifix—with rigid clasp  
The fingers held it in their grasp ;  
An ebon cross upon the vest  
Seemed with its weight to still the breast ;  
A mournful light was on the brow,  
Reflected from the lamp's red glow,  
Which o'er its ashy paleness shone,  
And lit the head as with a crown.

Faster and faster from the street,  
Though scarce you heard the tread of feet,  
Noiseless, yet swift, the masses came.  
Soon warm and moist with human breath  
Flickered and waved the torches' flame,  
Save where around that Crownèd Death  
With steadfast awe they burned : no more  
From storied arch to marble floor  
The sunbeam's chorded radiance streamed,  
But now its shortened columns gleamed  
O'er heads bowed down, whose tonsured line  
Shone as a saintly halo fine—  
O'er downcast eyes, whose shadows broad,  
Told me of midnight fast and prayer,

Of bitter strife 'gainst fiendish snare—  
Grim warfare in the name of God !

Beyond this circle, waving plumes  
And flashing helms were prostrate bent,  
And thick the air with incense-fumes :  
So passionately sweet, they lent  
A fainting sense, half ravishment,  
Half suffering, to the soul, as soft  
The fragrant clouds were borne aloft.  
On high the pealing anthem 'rung ;  
And first of faith and hope it sung,  
Then sadder, sadder grew the strain—  
As if the powers of hell prevailed,  
It moaned in ecstasy of pain,  
And through the solemn arches wailed ;  
Then sweet and clear, a single tone,  
As if a seraph chanted lone,  
Through thrilling cadences outpoured  
A vibrating harmonious chord.  
But 'mid the glory, dark to him,  
And deaf to chant and choral hymn,  
The poor pale corpse looked meek and mild,  
And humble as a little child.

So pale, so wan, it seemed to crave  
 The rest and solace of the grave!—  
 A little dust, 'neath which to hide  
 This mocking pomp, this blazoned pride.  
 So sad, it looked yet sadder here,  
 Upraised on this imperial bier,  
 O'er which the sunshine glittered fair,  
 O'er which the torches threw their glare,  
 O'er which the organ's grand despair  
 Breathed forth its agony of prayer—  
 Than if in some lone quiet room  
 It meekly waited for the tomb,  
 No earthly sounds, no human breath  
 T' affront the majesty of Death !

But here the tie of brotherhood  
 Was wrenched away ; yet round him Earth,  
 And Earth's most garish splendour stood :  
 The baptism of angel birth,  
 The holy calm, through which we know  
*This* the elect, God-chosen brow,  
 Sealed with His seal, was darkened, here,  
 For earth *too* far,—for heaven *too* near.

And 'stead of death-anointed peace,  
Forlorn and mystic woe, a sense  
Of deprecating anguish—these,  
With trumpet-voiced significance,  
Spoke through these fast-closed lips ; though loud  
The pulses of the kneeling crowd  
(That warm thick pant of breathing hearts  
To which yon breathless one imparts  
Yet quicker throbs), that hush was felt,  
Distinct through all : what tongue could speak  
Such eloquence ? what plaint could melt  
Into the soul ? what pathos seek  
To pierce the inmost heart as this  
Impassive, rigid helplessness ?  
The organ's golden voice seemed mute  
To its dumb patience, absolute  
In weakness, dominant o'er all  
Who knelt beside the broidered pall.  
Prayerless 'mid those earnest prayers,  
Unworshipping 'mid worshippers,  
And severed by a bond of clay,  
From all who worship and who pray,  
No mother's passionate caress  
Would dare that pallid brow to bless—

No wistful loving child might brook  
T' explore for love that changeless look,—  
A bridgeless, spanless gulf must lie  
'Twixt him and our humanity.

I turned away, and through the crowd,  
As fast as blinding tears allowed,  
Pressed on—the struggle was in vain ;  
Girt in by that strong living chain,  
I could not fly, and yet I felt  
My very soul within me melt.  
Though alien my clime, my faith,  
My human sympathy was strong ;  
But, like all human sympathy,  
Alas ! how vain in life or death !  
In life, we may not shield from wrong  
Our best beloved—in death dare we  
Beside them stand to soothe or save,  
In that dread struggle of the soul  
When sweeping onwards wave on wave  
Th' eternal billows o'er them roll ?

We know that o'er that form so pale,  
So calm, so motionless, so still,

Hell's leaguèred anarchies assail  
The wingèd host of heaven ; that Ill  
And Good are waging battle dread,  
As God or Satan wait the dead !  
And yet, unguarded and alone,  
(Oh, finite impotence of Love !)  
Each gentle lamb, each tender dove,  
With bleeding feet must wander on :  
They, whom with passionate emotion,  
We shielded o'er Life's stormy ocean,  
Alone must meet, alone must dare,  
Heaven's wrath, God's anger, Sin's despair !

Said I *alone* ! O God ! through all  
The flaming wings, the piercing swords,  
As file on file the glittering hordes  
Angelic bent above this pall,  
My awe-struck vision met a light,  
A lambent halo, glorious bright,  
From eyes divine, which o'er the dead  
Their orbèd radiance sheltering spread.  
Those eyes—those eyes—th' Archangel's shade,  
The stricken splendour of their brows,

Beneath their glance, yet undismayed,  
 A little babe who only knows  
 In the wide world its mother's breast,  
 Where it may nestle to its rest,  
 Might 'neath their light be lulled to sleep—  
 No human mother's glance so deep  
 In its soft pathos, tender love.  
 Those eyes—the very source of love!—  
 Creating where their glances stream,  
 So full of life intense they beam,  
 A Soul where soul seemed none, a breath  
 Out of the body of that Death !

The shining Presence manifest,  
 Faded the earthly pageant's glow,  
 The pomp, the prostrate crowd below,  
 And o'er the organ's triumphs heard,  
 As all its sea of sound were stirred,  
 Rose thrilling sweet the accents blest,  
 "Fear not—*I* am the first—the last :  
*I* have the keys of hell—of death."

Up to those eyes the dead man gazed,  
 Up to those eyes his eyes were raised



In contrite faith ; and though that look  
Read bare his heart as 'twere a book—  
And if the record were of sin,  
No flames of hell could light within,  
Such an undying agony  
As the reproof of that mild eye—  
Yet never from that Countenance  
Swerved a hair's-breadth the mortal's glance,  
As if Past time's eternity,  
The Future's immortality,  
Concentred and absorbed were  
In th' Infinite Love revealèd there !

My frail poor nature could not long  
Th' apocalyptic trance retain ;  
I sank to earth, and soon among  
The mourning crowd I stood again.  
But now no grief at lowly Death  
Mocked by Earth's pageant swelled my heart ;  
Nor for that pang of parting breath,  
Wherein each mortal bears his part—  
Wherein, in dread equality,  
The pauper and the monarch lie !

For still the veriest slave that e'er  
Gasp'd out in blood his life's despair,  
Scourged till he died, shall meet those Eyes ;  
And each oppressor that below  
Holds chartered right to tyrannise,  
Sceptre in hand, and crown on brow,  
Must meet them too—those glances keen  
Shall scan, inexorably just,  
*That* lifetime's woe, *this* lifetime's sin !  
Earth's erring judgments pass away,  
The finite doom of clay on clay,  
The cruel blames of dust on dust—  
But one Hand only holds the key  
Of Death, of Hell, Eternity !

In birth the shadow from those Eyes  
Hallows each infant's tiny brows,  
In death the seal which sanctifies  
Each corpse's pallid forehead shows  
The shining of those Eyes divine—  
In birth, in death, marked with His sign !  
Howe'er the gulf betwixt is passed,  
“ *I am the first—I am the last.*”

Peal out, O organ ! loud and calm,  
That thought more glorious music makes  
Than solemn chant or holy psalm !  
Its sweet accords such joy awakes,  
That death I deem th' excelling boon,  
Humanity's consummate crown !  
Throughout life's phases manifold,  
Its heights, its depths, its dust, its gold,  
Across its flood, I hear this cry,  
" Revere thy brother—he must die."

I look beyond each circumstance  
Which hallows or which shames—I know,  
Deeper than life's brief weal or woe,  
Death's mighty, true significance !  
Bound in one common brotherhood,  
Th' hosannas of the multitude,  
The meek dejection of the dead,  
No more a sadd'ning influence shed ;  
For little recks it, how or where,  
'Mid bitterest curse or fondest prayer,  
As brutes cast out upon the sod,  
Or thus beatified as God,

If the last bond of erring clay  
By God's own hand is rent away—  
The fellowship with earth undone,  
The union with Himself begun !

With chastened spirit slow I turned,  
From where those flaming torches burned,  
And passed into the daily street.  
But e'en when once I stood again  
Amid the throngèd haunts of men,  
A feeling of communion sweet,  
As I had shared some holy rite,  
And was new-born in peace and light,  
Through all my inner being ran.  
I sought my home an altered man ;  
Though lowlier, yet with purpose fraught,  
With noble truths divinely taught,  
Blest revelation unto me  
Of Death's supremest mystery.

## L'ARICCIA. DEATH IN LIFE.

NO. 1.

I GAZE upon a scene of Arcady.

'Tis noon, and o'er the vales and through the  
woods

The myriad voices of the summer's hymn  
Ring out 'tis noon throughout their solitudes !  
Such glittering radiance in the air, that dim  
And distant seems the blue and cloudless sky,  
As if a space for visioned dreams were given,  
The veil withdrawn midway 'twixt earth and  
heaven,

That, bathed in golden light, the painter's eye,  
Seraphic glories in its depths might trace,  
Or, leaning down o'er earth, a tender face  
(Its sweetness mortal, but its calm divine),  
Fair Nature smiling o'er her chosen shrine !

Ay—Time for once calls back fair Arcady ;  
And as I gaze, in rapture deep and still,  
Before me winding pass through vale and hill,  
And through the arches of the wooded glades,  
The herds as slow they seek the forest shades,  
While wears the sun his noontide majesty ;  
And first, with watchful eye and steadfast tread,  
The broad, disparted crescents on their brows,  
Austerely borne, the grey-hued steers have led  
The rustic path ; and then with antic play,  
And many a sidelong bound, grotesquely wreathing  
Their wild fantastic horns amid the boughs,  
The milk-white goats across the steep banks stray.  
It seems as 'twere some sculptured pageant breathing,  
A chiselled record of the Pagan Past—  
A fair procession bound for sacrifice !  
And nought we miss—for even the choral song  
And dance is here : where yonder pines have cast  
A thicker shade, a joyous laughing throng  
Of brown-cheeked girls, with large and flashing eyes,  
And ebon locks vine-garlanded are grouped ;  
And one who, fairer than the rest, has looped  
Those scarlet blossoms 'mid the tendrils, flings  
High o'er her head her tambourine, and sings

A measured chant, which through the greenwood  
rings :—

“ Our vineyard toils to-day are done,  
Sisters, let us rest,  
Each beside her chosen one,  
I on my mother's breast.

“ For me, no lover's smile e'er shone,  
Beguiling where it charms ;  
I seek it not, I envy none,  
Clasped in my mother's arms.

“ My love is hers, and hers alone,  
Each pulse of hers a part ;  
My very life to hers has grown,  
Linked to my mother's heart.

“ Ye smile. ‘ No mother hast thou known,  
An orphan from thy birth.’  
Her tender love, ye all may own  
Our loving mother—Earth.

“ But most am I her cherished one,  
She calls me to my rest,  
To lay all toil and sorrow down  
Asleep upon her breast ! ”

I heard a cadence in this simple song,  
Which echoed of the Etruscan age, most sweet  
And yet most sad : such ever did belong,  
To these, the early children of the earth,  
Who from her affluent breasts derived their birth,  
And knew no other source or end ; complete  
In them, the sensuous life, and oh ! how fair,  
The clime which poured its sunshine through their  
veins,  
And with a passionate and raptured heart,  
Of Beauty filled all earth, and sky, and air !  
Beats that quick fiery pulse no more ? remains  
Of that intoxicating charm no part ?  
Ah ! yes, there lives by mount and vale and stream,  
The Pagan glory, and its soul throbs here  
Voluptuous still—lo ! where we catch the gleam,  
Of yon Bacchante's dark far-floating hair,  
Inebriate with joy and life and youth,



Yet with divine, yet half-unconscious sense,  
Of Nature's deep pathetic influence,  
In her wild song ; the instinct of the south,  
This Life luxuriant, fervent, and supreme,  
The type and rose and crown of all beneath  
The gorgeous mask, the hollow brows of Death !

## L'ARICCIA. LIFE IN DEATH.

## NO. II.

A SOLEMN hymn is ringing through the dome,  
 And heavy incense rises through the air,  
 And from the casements of my village home  
 I gaze upon a pageant, sad yet fair.

Again I see the village maidens stand  
 Around their fairest one, but she no more  
 With song and dance shall join the vine-wreathed  
 band ;  
 For her, poor child, both song and dance are o'er !

Beneath the porch they pause, and on that face,  
 O'er which the mantling blush no more will rise,  
 I gaze, ere earth's maternal close embrace  
 Has veiled its fading beauty from my eyes.

Oh what a wealth on that low bier is spread,  
O'er which the curious eye may scan and hover,  
Ere all in yon dark grassy tomb be laid  
For the thick waving woods to hide and cover !

The mouth, on which no lover's kiss may press,  
Its rosy promise all untimely pale ;  
The breast, from which no little child's caress  
Shall draw sweet life, ere its white fount shall  
fail.

A mist before my yearning eyes has risen.  
Thy fate yet unfulfilled—so young to die !  
Ah ! not to such as thou is earth a prison,  
Nor death glad freedom from captivity.

Oh ! if this earth th' imperfect prelude be  
To the full harmony of heavenly song,  
How many a deep-toned chord is mute to thee,  
Thou, to whom yet no tender ties belong !

When angel mothers sing of parent love,  
How musicless thy voice amid the choir,

When lover's faith is sung in courts above,  
Low veiled thy virgin brow and hushed thy lyre.

Some say that death and sleep are twins : have they  
E'er seen Death clothed in garments quaint and  
rare ?

Or watched the living sunshine, laughing, play  
On the cold polished brow and waveless hair ?

This dumb negation, with the solemn sky  
Shining on its white lips, from all around  
Divorced as far as some lone mystery,  
With marble face amid the desert found.

This chill prophetic Presence claims no tie  
With the bright world, around, above, beneath,—  
Blank and austere, a crownless majesty,  
Inscrutable—immitigable Death !

And yet she lives : for ever and for ever  
Still floats the solemn hymn throughout the  
dome  
As if it sought, with passionate endeavour,  
To reach all hearts and bear its glad truth home.

Not the dark moral of the Pagan world,  
Its painted cheeks and false illusions fair,  
Now here, now past, as when a banner furled  
No longer spreads its blazoned pomp to air.

For them this life was as a dream, and death  
The one reality ; with us nought dies.  
Beauty to them but transitory breath,  
To us th' eternal smile of paradise !

These gracious scenes, which with a rare delight  
And charm divine have banqueted the eye,  
Wore chastened hues to them, and shone less bright,  
Sharing the doom of frail mortality.

With us they claim a bright inheritance,  
And shine emancipate from Death's control—  
They perish not with perishable sense,  
But live eternal in th' eternal soul.

And in those spheres towards which our spirits  
yearn,  
What magic memories will oft arise !

What thrilling records in our souls will burn,  
And moisten, with soft tears, immortal eyes !

Remembered melodies, or blooms divine,  
A line of beauty, or a word of power,  
There glow more bright, as on some jewelled shrine,  
Earth's gems are consecrate for evermore.

These Alban hills, these fair Arcadian shades,  
Yon lake's transparent breadth of tenderest blue,  
The herds defiling through the sunlit glades,  
This hour's Elysian charm shall oft renew.

These joyous girls, whose eyes dark flashing gleam,  
This poor pale corpse, with locked and stony brow,  
Not fleeting shadows of a fading dream,  
But portions of the Everlasting Now.

And thus a palace, stately and divine,  
Each chamber by its guardian angel trod ;  
In joys eternal lives the soul—a shrine  
Holy and pure, and consecrate to God.

There shall we roam, as in yon home of art,\*  
Pilgrims 'midst priceless records, while through all  
Echoes the beating of each raptured heart,  
Clear as a fountain's soft melodious fall.

The fountain's music is the hymn of praise,  
That murmurs oft, from yon orb'd worlds to this,  
The fountain's prised hues, the blended rays,  
Which there shall merge, past, present, future  
bliss !

\* Vatican.

A LIVING PICTURE SEEN IN VIA  
FELICE, ROME.

- THY casement, burnished by the setting sun,  
Shines round thee, like a rare and antique frame  
Of intricate device—the glory thrown  
By its illumined tracery lies like flame  
Upon the shadowy masses of thy hair ;  
And like a pictured saint thou glowest there,  
Enshrined so high, with the blue skies above thee :  
How may I dare to this dim earth to call thee !

The crimson cushion under thy soft arm  
Swells proudly round its whiteness, and has lent  
To its pale splendour hues so rich and warm  
No painter's hand so cunningly had blent  
The jealous shades ; thy large black dreamy eyes  
Are raised in rival beauty to the skies.  
Deem'st thou each cloud that floats so bright above  
A kindred angel sighing for thy love ?



I feel, as gazing thus upon thy face,  
From the low darkness of the sordid street,  
As when, revealed amid th' ethereal space,  
The saints of old beheld Madonna sweet,  
To comfort and to soothe, a glimpse of heaven,  
Foretaste and type of bliss, to them was given.  
Less happy I—the heaven where I would soar  
To me is closed—rejected, I adore,  
And, vainly true, my fruitless worship pour !

## SAY WHICH WERE BEST.

STEEPED in some soft delicious sin,  
 Whose charmèd languors wrap thee in,  
 Soul ! take thy golden ease and play  
 All the orient summer day ;  
 No storms thy joyous calm shall break,  
 From thy bliss thou shalt not wake.  
 Some will tell thee there is gall  
 Within the purple cup—that all  
 Its honied sweetness will o'erflow  
 And leave but poisoned dregs below.  
 The fools ! they lie—securely drink ;  
 More deeply as thy lip shall sink,  
 More luscious, rich, and strong the wine—  
 Half delirious, half divine !

Loud the mighty sorceress laughed  
 As her slaves her goblet quaffed :

The liquid flame ran wild within  
And each was happy in his sin,  
Unconscious of the outward shame,  
Sealed from regret, remorse, or blame—  
Sealed from all passion which might stir,  
Or sting, each sense-bound worshipper.  
The false enchantress ! she knows well  
That if the joy were bitter sweet,  
That if the guilt were not complete,  
A moment's suffering breaks the spell !  
And thus she guards their trancèd sleep  
With opiates strange, luxurious, deep,  
And, nerveless, pulseless they remain,  
Hugging their sweet enthralling chain—  
The soothèd senses wildly blest,  
The lullèd conscience charmed to rest  
Borne adown the siren stream,  
Life, one long voluptuous dream !

And this is sin ? then what is error ?  
Oh, the anguish ! oh, the terror !  
Of the well-deservèd blame  
Of the soul's unquiet shame—  
The retribution which must come  
As we face the self-wrought doom ;

Sowing seeds which we must gather,  
Rousing storms which we must weather,  
Some yoke 'neath which our souls are driven,  
Some chain to which our souls are riven,  
Some brand which must for aye remain,  
Some self-inflicted damning stain !

And is this all ? Oh ! if it were,  
It then were well to bravely dare  
The whelming floods of guilt and sin,  
And plunge our shivering souls within,  
And let its headlong torrent flow  
O'er all remorse, regret, or woe,  
Laving in Lethe tides all sense  
Of Being's nobler influence :  
If but to be a worm, 'tis best  
Hushed in some fair and downy nest,  
To pass through Life in idle swoon  
Until th' ignoble dream be done.

But 'tis not so—we must endure  
The fester ere the wound we cure.  
(Sorrow th' eternal law of Earth,  
The pangs of travail prelude Birth,

And through the unuttered agony  
Which we call Death, our souls are free.)  
'Tis our prerogative, our doom,  
To strive, to struggle, to o'ercome ;  
Through error's veils to burst away  
From silken dalliance into Day,  
Unweaving Folly's fettering coil,  
To work out bitter truth by Toil ;  
Bravely our clanking chains to wear,  
Nobly our humbling yoke to bear,  
And stand erect beneath the skies  
Through self-renouncing sacrifice ;  
Baffled, defeated, not undone,  
To expiate and to atone—  
(What angel glory in those words !  
They pierce the soul as flaming swords)  
To expiate and to atone—  
To hope, endure, achieve, aspire,  
Though bleeding, tortured, tried by fire,  
Till heaven's redeeming path be won,  
And we the crowning heights shall tread,  
Life sanctified—Death perfected !  
Say which were best.

## ORPHANHOOD.

THE shadow of the forest trees—  
My childhood withered 'neath their spell,  
In the old home remembered well,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees  
Between me and the black sky spread,  
As I lay waking on my bed,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees—  
I wept and struggled for the light,  
But all around was black as night,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees  
Robbed us of life's enchanting plays ;  
Both heart and stream were dark always,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees—  
We heard of love and of the sun,  
But in our gloomy world were none,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees—  
One morn they quivered in the blast,  
Wild moaned the storm, and broke at last  
The shadow of the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees—  
'Mid tossing branches struggling through,  
I hailed a sky of happy blue  
Unshadowed by the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees  
No longer hushed the streamlet's song,  
In fierce wild mirth it sped along,  
Unshadowed by the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees  
    Clouded no more my heaven above ;  
    My heart awoke to raptured love,  
            Unshadowed by the trees.

Alas ! alas ! the forest trees—  
    Once more the time grew dark and still,  
    Murmured no more the poor lone rill,  
            Shadowed by forest trees.

Alas ! alas ! the forest trees—  
    Again they closed around my head,  
    And love and hope and joy were dead,  
            Shadowed by forest trees.

Alas ! alas ! the forest trees—  
    The wind that woke the stream is past,  
    This heart, wild beating, breaks at last,  
            Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees—  
    Alas for heart ! alas for stream !  
    But both have had one blessed gleam,  
            Unshadowed by the trees.



Despite the shadow of the trees,  
The heart has loved, the stream has sung,  
Now let their mournful knell be rung,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

## A LOVE RHAPSODY.

IF this be true, the fond Athenian's\* dream,  
 That here the soul still mourns its better part,  
 And yearning seeks each visionary gleam,  
 Till dawns the true Aurora of the heart ;  
 Then am I blessed—for I have found thee,  
 And my love has bound thee,  
 And thou and I are one !

As o'er the waters of the troubled deep,  
 God's Spirit moved, and the dark chaos woke,  
 And, starting from the depths of pregnant sleep,  
 Creation's myriad forms their silence broke,—

\* Referring to the Platonic idea of the soul being divided on earth, and love being the intense desire of the two portions to amalgamate again. This union forming the perfect soul is probably in one angelic form.

With songs of joy, from hopeless loveless Night  
I, too, have woke to light

Since thou and I are one !

But a yet closer union waits us still—

From this sweet Eden of the heart, strong Death  
May banish us by his victorious will,

But not for aye—with Life's last sobbing breath  
Our spirits shall unite—twin mortals here,  
In heaven *one* angel fair,—

For thou and I are one !

'Tis true, those angels on God's missions sent,

Whose grand and sexless beauty awes the soul,  
Were severed lovers once, till love had blent

Their beings into one harmonious whole ;  
Thus, when earth fades, from this weak swimming  
brain,

And I have loosed my chain,

Shall thou and I be one !

Thou hast an angel's gentle strength—thy mien

Wears grave and angel calm no storms can move ;

I, all unworthy and unmeet, I ween,  
But I,—I have an angel's power of love,  
And this redeems, and thus my part I claim,  
In that fair glorious name,  
And thou and I are one !

On what bright healing message we shall speed,  
Whether to feed with dew youth's opening bloom,  
Or bind with softest balm the hearts that bleed,  
Broken and crushed in earth's yet mourning home ;  
Whether to wait, or do our Father's will,  
I know not, but that still,  
Shall thou and I be one !

Whether with mighty pinions we shall soar  
To bear glad tidings to the farthest star,  
United we shall serve, united pour  
One hymn of praise before God's flaming car.  
Ah me ! the raptured vision is too bright  
And fair for mortal sight,  
Till thou and I are one !

Whether with those, who duteous stand and wait,  
And wave their verdant palms before His throne,

We there shall bend before the jasper gate  
And lay before God's feet one golden crown,—  
I only know that then this heart of mine  
Shall beat, beloved, *in* thine,  
And thou and I be one !

It was a wondrous legend that which told,  
That after bitter griefs the soul and love,  
The Psyche and the Eros, should enfold  
In one their truant wings—but far above  
E'en that dear joy to know that, parted here,  
We shall 'as seraphs there  
Eternally be one !

ROME, 1852.

## THE MORNING MOON.

AMID the morning's bloom and splendour  
 The wan pale moon a shade has cast ;  
 A revelation sad, yet tender,  
 Of Love's unburied mournful past.

She comes with mute reproachful face,  
 A boding ghost 'mid morning's beam ;  
 Thou strong Noonday, arise and chase  
 That saddening enervating gleam !

I have a work which must be done,  
 All soft regrets I backward cast,  
 And let the Present, with its sun,  
 Outshine the weak unworthy Past.

That fond vain Past I must live down  
 Until is spent my work-day light ;  
 Then will it shine, my martyr-crown,  
 The moon of Death's redeemèd night.

## DESPONDENCY.

## NO. I.

My life is as a weary Bridge of Sighs,  
“ A palace and a prison on each hand ;”  
But I have left my youth’s bright palaces,  
And passed the portals of Love’s fairy-land,  
And entered on that dark and dreary path  
Which every earth-born traveller must tread,  
Wherein the soul foredoomed no solace hath,  
No refuge from its anguish or its dread,  
But in that frowning prison-house, the grave,  
Regret, remorse, for time misspent and gone.  
Jailers, whose cruelty I dare not brave,  
Walk at my side and goad me sternly on,  
While through the arches moan continually  
The dull deep breakers of life’s surging sea !

## REPROOF.

## NO. II.

OH say not thus ! thy life is as a stair,  
Of which the first steps lean upon the earth ;  
With each ascent you rise to purer air,  
Where God's angelic ministrants have birth ;  
Though fair and sunny, Earth's alluring bowers,  
Break through her dear enchantments, and pursue  
Thy path right upward—for those purple flowers  
O'er which thou tread'st their sweetness shall renew  
And bloom eternal through eternal hours—  
Till as you higher climb and from your view  
Earth's soft green pleasaunce fades, faint not nor fear ;  
Though solemn in its loneliness the road,  
Faith's star shines high above thee, bright and clear,  
And, won the height—the last step leads to God !



## STANZAS.

DARK thoughts pursue me even in sleep,  
 And bitter tears mine eyelids steep ;  
 Yet, through the silence, gently borne,  
 I hear sweet whispers of the morn—  
     For the birds sing through my dreams.

I struggle with the nightmare spell,  
 And 'gainst the fevered weight rebel ;  
 I strive to gaze upon the light  
 Which pierces through my shadowy night,  
     From morning's blessèd gleams !

Dazzled, confused by fear and doubt,  
 I seek to reach the world without ;  
 If I could wake, I there might see,  
 The darkness o'er, that I was free—  
     That day had dawned at last ;

That now my sun of hope had risen—  
That now my soul could burst its prison—  
That life was shining bright and fair—  
That love was smiling—*thou* wert there,  
The night for ever past!

## ROME FROM THE RIPETTA.

“We will trust God—the blank interstices  
 Men take for ruins, He will build into  
 With pillared marbles rare, or knit across  
 With generous arches, till the fane’s complete.”

—*Casa Guidi Windows.*

WILT thou forget that summer evening’s shining,  
 When thou and I, dear friend, together stood,  
 And silent watched the purple shades declining,  
 In languid glory, o’er the Tiber’s flood ?

One fond last beam yet lingered on the dome,  
 And welcome gave to each pale star which rose ;  
 Breathless we stood beneath the spell of Rome—  
 Inexorable, fathomless repose !

On what great secret dost thou brood, O Rome !  
 Amid the vexèd earth’s unquiet stir ?  
 When will Jehovah’s lightnings rend thy gloom,  
 And fire the pregnant elements to war ?

Will not the Voice which said—" Let there be light,"  
And light creative sprang from Chaos' womb—  
Dispel the phantoms of this darker night,  
While sing the morning stars—" Be free, O Rome!"

First light, then life—first truth, then liberty;  
If such the everlasting law—what then  
Avails, that with phrenetic phantasy,  
Should struggle in vain strife insensate men ?

The immortal sorrow of Titanic hearts  
Ever lamenting in abysmal pain—  
Eternal failure—warns the fetter parts  
Once more to reunite the shortened chain.

But God has patience—if weak men have faith,  
Long ages rise and ebb before His throne  
Transient and vain, as dying infant's breath,  
Yet each its own appointed task has done.

And thus the purpose of a people's will,  
Though tyrants oft the work of shame renew,  
Stands steadfast as the Will Supreme ; while still  
Fail the weak efforts of the frenzied few.

Not prematurely severed falls a chain,  
A nation wins its birthright to be free,  
On the broad field of sure material gain,  
By freedom's law, not lawless liberty!

By work-days, not by "feste," pens, not swords,  
Ploughshares, 'stead of daggers; not the flow  
Of idle "vivas," nor warm frothy words,  
But cold mute lips, knit brows, and hands that do.

Mark ye no symptoms of a mighty birth,  
Hear ye no voice of angel Prophecy,  
No signs of travail in this pausing earth,  
No portents in yon grand and star-crowned sky?

Hark! from the gardens of the Aventine  
There is a welcome hum of busy strife;  
A people rise, where once knelt slaves supine,  
Walking tumultuously to freedom's life!

Effaced the splendour of Rienzi's fame  
Beneath thy dim Byzantine fane, St John!  
Paled by the glories of a mightier name,  
The giant shade was advent of the dawn.

A people and a leader. More, yet more,  
Material progress lends her iron aid ;  
As Italy unites from shore to shore,  
Electric\* thoughts a fiery pathway tread.

The rival sirens of the opposing seas,  
Their lifelong yearning fading in their eyes,  
Sing, floating downwards through the freshening  
breeze  
A swan-like dirge, with soft harmonious sighs.

All antique fable and all modern cheat  
Crouch in base fear before the flashing storm,  
And Science, the archangel, 'neath his feet  
Has crushed each falsehood's vile satanic form.

Within the Coliseum's weed-crowned wall,  
In immemorial silence mute no more,  
Whisper stern voices and the moonbeam's fall,  
On phantoms pacing its sepulchral floor.

\* There was a rumour in 1852 of an electric telegraph at Rome to be connected with two others—one at Ancona, the other at Civita Vecchia.

Wherever heroes perished, martyrs prayed  
Their solemn voiceless last appeal to God,  
Where pale Cecilia's gentle tomb is laid,  
Where patriot blood has sanctified the sod—

Wherever act heroic, faith sublime,  
Have found the Calvary on earth, a power  
Regenerative lives ; when strikes the time  
Each shining Presence quits the grave once more !

The haloes on their brow illumine thine,  
For ever fled its weird mysterious gloom—  
The Dawn wakes Memnon—and a voice divine,  
Offspring of Light, bursts from thy hills, O Rome !

Yon grey Campagna, stretching far and calm :  
Yon stately arches striding to the sea,  
Yield myriad echoes of that glorious psalm,  
And chant their grand hosanna to the free.

The Marian cypress, and the Dorian pine,  
And lone Soracte's blue and distant height,  
Ever reverberate that song divine  
As deepens into noon the orbèd Light.

Mazzini ! in thy sad and exiled home,  
    Arise ! that light sheds aureole on thy brow ;  
August, yet erring dreamer, o'er thy Rome  
    Exulting waves the badge of Freedom now.

Like Simeon, breathe one deep exulting prayer,  
    And turn with folded hands to yonder dome,  
Where shines amid the stars yon cross in air,  
    Epiphany of hope to thee and Rome !



## THE STUDIO.

FLOAT on, thou stately pageant, proud and fair,  
 Float on, in choral beauty, joyous Hours ;  
 While to your God the immortal steeds ye bear  
 With festal step and song, and votive wreaths of  
 flowers !

Revealed in marble, all the wondrous past,  
 Shines here in mythic beauty and no more,  
 To work-day toil and sordid care bound fast—  
 We dream (fond idle dreams !) beside the Elysian  
 shore.

Beauty and courage, ardour tamed by grace,  
 Strength ruled by sweetness ; fiercest energies  
 Divinely curbed, yet guided on their race,—  
 These are not dreams, they emblem great realities !

Oh fair primeval age ! so nigh thy birth,  
God's awful Presence brooded ever near,  
Winged forms angelical still trod the earth,  
Yet musical each star in its harmonious sphere.

And therefore, heart, and soul, and ear, and eye,  
From godlike influence drew life divine,  
And truth, religion, high philosophy,  
Made manifest, through sensuous forms, their faith  
benign.

Not wholly dim the rapture, fled the dream ;  
We all might speak of visions delicate,  
Impalpable, o'er which soft haloes gleam  
To poesy and antique fable dedicate.

And there live some, who, 'mid the pomp and strife  
Which men forlorn miscall felicity,  
Fulfil the mission of a nobler life,  
And give to mortal yearnings immortality.

Ay, come with me, yon fountain murmurs clear  
Beneath its veil of fern ; and round it bloom,

Lavish of beauty, prodigally fair,  
Wild flowers, whose purple mocks the o'er-arching  
skies of Rome.

No pause, but enter, welcome meet is given,  
The pale still Gods look on us grand and calm ;  
It is the threshold of the Grecian heaven,  
And odorous all the air with asphodel and balm.

There shine the Hours, serenely sweet, upborne  
On wingèd speed to hail the lord of light ;  
Here, grave Aurora, pouring from her urn  
The soft and fresh'ning dews which part the day  
and night.

And thou, young Charioteer with looks of fire,  
What quenchless ardour burns within thine eye,  
Forgetful in the rush of hot desire,  
"Patient is Genius," patient God's eternity !

Thy headlong steeds disdain a rule like thine,  
Their fiery nostrils scent the sun afar ;  
Woe to the hand that would their speed confine,  
And, mortal, guide through flaming seas the im-  
mortal car !

And lo ! where sighing 'neath her Maker's hand  
The roseate life, slow stealing through her form  
Her forfeit Godhood 'mid the Olympian band,  
Discrowned Cythera mourns, with mortal blushes  
warm.

And holiest of these revelations blest,  
Which have sublimed this visioned solitude,  
Yon legend of the soul and love, expressed  
As if fair Psyche's joy the marble's self imbued.

A life's whole utterance, fully and entire  
Is here—majestic thoughts which calmly breathe  
Through Phidian forms—a mind whose subtle fire  
Imperishably glows triumphant over Death !

Death sways not, where creative art bestows  
An infinite success to high endeavour,  
Harmoniously the circle ebbs and flows,  
In the created the Creator lives for ever.

But how to win success ? by steadfast will,  
And no vain dalliance with a lofty aim,  
Patient and strong, relentless to fulfil  
Purpose invincible, thus earned the palm of Fame !

Each day a pearl upon a costly shrine,  
That shrine a consecrated life, all vowed  
A sacrifice elect to art divine,  
And worshipped through art's glorious priesthood  
to its God !

## THE ANGELS OF LIFE.

## I.

PROSTRATE beside the rock-bound shores of time,  
Alone, storm-tossed and harbourless, I wept—  
I wept o'er all the buried wrecks sublime  
Which in its flood irrevocably slept.

## II.

I heard the footsteps of the bygone years,  
As slow they passed with chill, relentless eyes,  
And with a shuddering awe, amid my tears,  
The gift each bore away could recognise.

## III.

Said one—"I bore thy bloom of health away,  
I kissed its rose with breath all icy cold ;  
Child of the sun ! without its fostering ray,  
Thy being could not ripen nor unfold.

## IV.

“ ’Stead of the buoyant gush of southern fire,  
Which should have burnt within thy veins like  
flame,  
Trembling and dim and yearning to expire,  
Life’s waning, flickering pulses went and came.”

## V.

“ I,” said a voice more stern and cruel yet,—  
“ I brought to thee a cup, where lustrous shone  
The pearl of love, but, ere thy lip was wet,  
I smote thee back, and dashed the goblet down.”

## VI.

“ And know’st thou me?” one mocking Phantom said;  
“ Perished with me thy fair aspiring dreams ;  
The curse of failure by my influence shed  
Baffled in mid career thy ardent schemes.”

## VII.

Health, love, ambition lost, I could but find  
A crushed and broken life’s successful years,  
A solitude of heart, a waste of mind,  
And bitter end of all these bitter tears !

## VIII.

“ I want my Happiness,” I madly cried,  
“ Some poor brief joy to gild Fate’s ruthless course;  
O’er some it flows a lavish bounteous tide :  
O God ! but one—one drop from Thy rich source !”

## IX.

And, as yet hopelessly I wept, a light  
Broke on the dun horizon’s lowest verge,  
And o’er its gleaming path fair spirits bright  
Trode with soft noiseless feet the heaving surge.

## X.

“ We are thy future,” said the gracious band—  
“ Life’s promised heritage, the best, the last !”  
As each advancing footstep touched the strand,  
Faded the mournful spectres of the past.

## XI.

One kissed my lips with kisses warm and pure—  
A sweetness without smiles was on her brow ;  
Each kiss aroused me, I could now endure,  
Accept my grief, and thus resist its blow.



## XII.

“ I bring thee Patience,” said the gentle voice,  
 “ Thou calledst me Hope when life was in its  
 bloom ;  
 But Hope matured is Patience. Ah, rejoice !  
 ’Tis thus, where hope despairs, *I* can o’ercome.”

## XIII.

Then with linked hands two seraph forms serene  
 Approached ; harmoniously their voices flowed ;  
 “ And we,” they said, with hushed and solemn mien,  
 “ We bring thee Love to man and Faith in God !

## XIV.

“ Instead of earthly passion’s fiery glow,  
 Its transient ecstasy, its wild unrest,  
 Between our torches calm thy life shall flow,”  
 And breathed a blessing on my throbbing breast.

## XV.

Dried were my tears, when lo ! the fairest, last  
 Filled with her grand maternal form, the space,  
 But darkened by the shade of pinions vast,  
 I saw not yet the glory of her face.

## XVI.

But as the glittering fleece of spray divides  
The white wings of the waterfall, and shows  
The luminous arch o'er which its beauty glides,  
Slow she unveiled, and beautiful arose.

## XVII.

“Mortal! the dream of life I solve for thee,”  
She spoke, it was a voice without a breath,—  
“I am the pilot of Eternity—  
Thou seekest Happiness, I bring thee Death!”

## THE SEVEN CHORDS OF THE LYRE.

## NO. I.—ASPIRATION.

OH, would I were yon glorious arch on high—  
 Itself so fair, its promise fairer still !  
 God's gracious message smiling in the sky,  
 With love, and hope, and faith all hearts to fill ;  
 And as, where it meets earth, rich jewels gleam,  
 Clear sapphires, kingly rubies, emeralds rare,  
 Would I in death Fame's sparkling guerdon wear,  
 Fulfilled youth's aspiration and its dream.  
 As fair my hope as yonder prised hues—  
 As brightly, may its aim accomplished shine !  
 Courage and truth and constancy divine,  
 The gems in which those lucid rays shall fuse,  
 To noble promise, blest fruition given—  
 My life a bow which spans both earth and heaven.

## NO. II.—LOVE.

The night is silent, and the yearning earth  
In breathless stillness keeps expectant state  
(A mortal pregnant with immortal birth),  
Till lo ! full statured, calm, inviolate,  
Born in the purple, and crowned Queen, when born,  
The regnant moon ascends her golden throne !  
As paused the earth, so paused my heart forlorn,  
And yet instinct with mystic prescience, grown  
From the long travail of my struggling soul,  
Till, hope consummate, full fruition blest,  
Great love arose, transfiguring the whole  
Of my glad being, which thus finds its rest !  
Its arid places bloom, its ruins shine,  
As shines the earth, beneath yon orb divine.

## NO. III.—JOY.

Oh take me, God, for my life's cup is full !  
I would to thee the rich libation pour.  
Sceptred and crowned, do I not tread the shore  
Of the blest isles ?—and ere the beautiful  
Enchanting vision fade, oh let me die  
Wearing the palm of life's felicity !

Let them fear death, who, wearied with long strife,  
Yet struggle onwards creditors to life,  
For some poor tardy boon which flies their grasp ;  
But I, with joy's flush roses on my cheek—  
But I, who hold Love's lilies in my clasp,  
Know full content ; one rose-leaf more would break  
The fair proportions of my happiness :  
Let death take all, ere life can make it less.

## NO. IV.—DOUBT.

O'er the "white wonder" of that orbèd breast,  
Through which the blue luxurious veins seem proud  
To bear the roseate life, dar'st *thou* to rest,  
Malignant asp, more envious than the cloud  
That sears the glories of the summer sky,  
And brings foul tempests where was golden calm?  
More envious and more stern, clouds break and die,  
And tempests pass, but thou, amid the balm,  
And joy and perfume of that soft domain,  
Defeating all its beauty doth remain,  
And taintest with thy sharp envenomed power  
That life's sweet pride, till life itself be o'er !  
So stings this doubt which pierces through my heart,  
And wars with love, till love itself depart.

## NO. V.—SORROW.

If trampled grass gives perfume ; if the bowl  
Must be well broken ere the wine can flow ;  
From the abysses of this storm-tossed soul,  
From this my destiny's last mortal blow,  
From sobs, and sighs, and agonies of tears,  
From tortured life, and happiness forborne,  
The utter ruin of my youth's lost years,  
And from the bitter present's strife forlorn,  
The future's terror and the past's despair ;  
And from this crushed and grief-wrung heart I dare  
To call on thee, O God ! Let others bring  
Their love, obedience, faith, as offering :  
I lay my sorrows prostrate at thy feet.  
Avenging God ! to Thee bruised flowers are sweet.

## NO. VI.—ENDURANCE.

Wild heart, be still ! From yon lone mount, a star  
Looks singly forth on the dark world. Art thou  
Less brave ? To thee thy fears and sorrow are  
As night to yon bright orb ; yet is its brow  
Radiant and calm, as when amid the joy  
Of the young earth its light flashed forth from God !

Can summer suns, or gentle moons alloy  
The immemorial woe to which art vowed,  
O cypress-tree? Yet dost thou sternly bear  
Thy mournful doom, and with a brave despair  
Droop'st not, albeit no smiles of vernal spring  
To thy funereal crown new light can bring.  
Lo! these bear up 'gainst Fate a steadfast war;  
Am I less noble than the tree or star?

## NO. VII.—FAITH.

Yet more, life's music holdeth more than these,  
Endurance and submission, more, far more;  
There is a golden chord whose harmonies  
Have deeper echoes; strike that chord and soar  
Through faith o'er sorrow; we may struggle yet,  
And with grief's armèd angel we may strive,  
But faith shall win the blessing He can give;  
Our lips will smile, although our eyes are wet,  
Till we life's earnest mystery have solved;  
And then, weak heart, that in thy joy sought death,  
Now that the varied circle has revolved,  
Know that the soul which breathes immortal breath,  
Stronger than joy, stronger than grief, must be,  
And trample both, to reach, O God to Thee!

## THE WRECKED LIFE.

THE burning heart of red autumnal woods,—  
 The flushing pomp of sunset skies—a blaze  
 Of fierce, wild, hurrying fire, as when upbursts  
 Some city's conflagration, 'mid the hush  
 And darkness of the night—commingled flame  
 Of still pale glories and of lurid light—  
 So gorgeous, magical, and strangely fair  
 That lady's face !

None read the meaning of its smiles, and none  
 Could trace the passionate and haunting grief  
 Which wrote its sad defeature on her brow,  
 And hollowed out the opal arch whence shone  
 Inviolable the sorrows of her eyes.

Sometimes a thought like a warm Afric wind,  
 Which with its breath makes vermeil tardy blooms,  
 Hid from the sun in lone Sicilian vales,  
 Would redden o'er her cheek, then all too soon  
 The shadows darkened and the glow died out—



And a pale phantom of a perfect face,  
Set lips, stern nostrils, and a white, cold cheek  
Alone remained !

Her smile, it was so rare and marvellous,  
And so became the mouth which palaced it,  
That the proud curve became a gracious type,  
Indelible in death—its radiance flashed  
All Paradise upon me once ; and when  
Long years had passed away, and the fine brow,  
And the large eyes (dark violets, sweet but sad,)  
Were empty sockets, and the veined pearl  
Of the transparent flesh was ashes, dust—  
I recognised the parted line of that rare lip—  
Its matchless sweetness, now left desolate,  
And barren evermore of smiles.

Dost ask me wherefore she did smile or weep ?  
Know'st thou, O curious Questioner of Hearts,  
That memories of balmy, vernal woods  
Live in the Frost-King's thought, when with froze  
breath,

And icy touch, he traces o'er the panes,  
In crystal characters, white mystic boughs,  
With delicatest foliage, plummy sprays,  
And all the tender secrets of the spring ?

Or wherefore was she sad? Vain fool! dost know  
The dark archangel, whose vast wings do sweep  
Between the sea and sky, unseen by man,  
Yet leaves his mighty shadow on the wave,  
Which, like a great soul conscious of a fate,  
And darkened by an omen, all ignore,  
Accepts, but shudders at the prophecy?  
None knew her, but all felt who saw her once  
That this was Beauty—that their lives henceforth,  
Their daily lives, were richer by this boon.  
The eye which dwelt upon her gracious shape,—  
The ear which listened to her rich, sweet voice,—  
The senses, ravished by the soft perfume  
Which hung around her,—did accept the gift,  
As wondering beggars do receive rich alms,  
With benedictions merged in ecstasy.  
Some lives are like rare missals, golden-clasped,  
And ruby-bound ;—but open them, and read.  
Within are pictured bleeding agonies  
And expiations, struggles, martyrdoms,  
All blazoned on the dainty vellum page.  
And some, all luminous unto the eye,  
Are in themselves lone, cold, and dark ;—without  
Glorious as that Archangel who does stand

Facing the east, the sunset on his wings,  
Exalt o'er Rome,—within, impassive bronze.  
And there are some whose sorrows give them palms;  
Others, whose passion is of shame—who, 'stead  
Of saintly aureole must wear a brand,  
A stigma ineffaceable and drear,  
In expiation of Ancestral wrong.  
Whate'er it was—the burden of the heart  
Which bled to death within that lady's breast  
Remained for aye a solemn mystery.  
She had no commune with the outer world;  
But once some hurried, sudden tidings came—  
A few brief words writ on a mourning scroll:  
She read with breathless, fevered haste, then rose,  
And tore off from her slender hand a ring,  
So hastily the soft fair skin was grazed.  
She smiled—a bitter, sad, self-pitying smile—  
“The link has chafed me deeper here,” she said,  
And smote her breast—“Free—free—too late—my  
God!  
A life-long sorrow, and a life-deep wrong,  
For the blind error of a girl's vain choice—  
Is this thy law—is this thy justice—God?”  
And one large, heavy tear dropped slowly down,

(What argosies of hope that tear o'erwhelmed !)  
And the eyes closed to prison back the tears  
She would not shed ; then all was calm again—  
A plenitude of hopeless, lifeless calm—  
As when, amid the desert, where stood tents  
Only a heap of blank grey ashes tells  
That life, and joy, and being have been there.  
Beside her casement for long hours she sate ;  
It opened on brown, russet prairies, where  
The tawny harvest spread its burnished sea.  
She watched it as it rippled into gold,  
Stirred by light winds, or slept in yellow flakes  
Of yellow foam beneath the quiet stars.  
Mute, motionless, and resolute, she sate,  
As Rizpah in the time of harvest sate  
Beside the corpses of her murdered sons,  
Through the long, breathless, scorching summer  
days,  
Through sultry nights lit by the Syrian moon,  
Till she outwatched the ravening cruel beasts,  
Who shrank before her eye, fierce with the woe,  
“The mighty hunger” ne'er to be appeased—  
The wild forlornness of a mother's heart—  
And thus the Lady sate, and sate, and watched,

Not the stark visage of the unburied dead,  
But by one wrecked, bereaved, and wasted life.  
The late rose in her bosom mated well  
Its beauty—fragrant flower and soft white breast—  
Each peerless, and so frail—most fair the flower,  
In its ripe harmony and fate fulfilled,  
And loyal to the death unto its Queen.  
Not so the Lady ;—her sad life was jarred  
With unaccomplished aims—discordant hopes.  
She seemed as one to whom Fate owed a debt,  
One never to be cancelled. Tender ties,  
Sweet charities, and bounteous ministrings,  
Were not for her. No father's hand had laid  
A blessing on her brow ;—no mother's kiss  
Was as an amulet about her heart.  
She seemed as if no childhood had been hers,—  
Like some strong spirit, ever young and fair,  
But who ignored the clinging weaknesses,  
The debile and pathetic falterings  
Of infancy and childhood. E'en that breast,  
Which gave such promise, prodigal of love,  
In its magnificent and queenly wave,  
Looked marble cold ;—no little child's caress  
Had made it heave with soft, delicious pain,

As flowed its life to feed another's life!  
And in the unbroken stillness of her voice,  
Here was no tremulous and yearning tone,  
Such as oft stirs the heart with echoes deep  
Of loving welcomes and heart-wrung farewells!  
And since that scroll there was a deeper shade—  
A something of endurance and self-scorn  
Around her—proud endurance blent with shame.  
A chained captive might look thus, if doomed  
To suffer in the presence of a foe. Was this remorse?  
And with the swan-like plumage and soft down  
Of her pure woman's heart, was she enforced  
To satiate his serpent-sting? None knew.  
And thus she lived. Perchance this lonely life  
Was not all sorrow ;—none can ever know.  
The stars shine ever brightest unto one  
Beneath whose toiling feet are arid sands.  
The Ghebir's faith arose in burning wastes.  
And when no flowers bloom round us, or beneath,  
We gaze where piercing and eternal burn  
The gentle lustre of the Sister Stars—  
Steadfast Arcturus, with his solemn brow,  
And armed Orion, with his blood-red sword.  
But suddenly she grew more sad, more pale.

Was it God's mercy touched her secret woe,  
And pitied it, and saved her? So she died.

Alas!

Hast felt the thrilling and vibrating hush  
When great resolves are born of words sublime  
And promise of heroic deeds, struck out  
From the warm depths of fiery beating hearts,  
Till full the air with guardian angel wings?  
Hast marked the strange, sweet, fluttering pause  
which comes

O'er night's fast-throbbing pulse—as if the stars,  
All faint with adoration, lapsed in prayer?

So, with a darkness pregnant of the light—

A silence resonant of music—was

The sylvan spot she called her home;—its air

Was holy as a place of sanctuary—

Its empty chambers were instinct and rife

With influence from shining Presences,

Unseen, but felt with earnest, soothing power:

Her soul had loved it, and still lingered there!

## TO GEORGES SAND

ON HER INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH BARRETT  
BROWNING.

THE late repentance, and the long despair,  
The sin-bound soul's fierce struggle to be free,  
A fettered maniac raging in her lair  
Are thine !

A life all musical with happy love,  
An angel child who sings beside her knee,  
Pulses which true to heavenly rhythms move,  
Are hers !

Dark hair strained backwards from a forehead broad,  
Dark eyes, in whose chill light strange secrets live,  
As in the deep grim monsters watch and ward,  
Are thine !



Soft curls which droop around an oval cheek,  
Calm brows where holy thought has power to give  
Transfigured glory to a woman meek,

Are hers !

Her childhood smileth still around her mouth—  
O'er thy white gleaming teeth, thy full lips part--  
Eager for joys which may renew thy youth ;  
Some brief wild rapture which may cheat, yet warm,  
Kindling the languor of a hopeless heart.  
With thee life stagnates, or is flashing storm.

To shapeless horrors thou hast given name,  
And woes, 'neath which poor tortured hearts had  
bowed

And borne till now in trembling patient shame,  
Rose at thy call, and spoke their loud despair,  
And women's wrongs, like opened graves, avowed  
Their stark foul secrets to the startled air !

Thou wert Deliverer, but Victim too,  
Th' avenger ever wears the martyr's palm ;  
It is the Orestes whom the fiends pursue—  
Alone to foredoomed Hamlet's vengeful eyes

(While sleep the murtherous pair in guilty calm)  
The spectre frowns, the boding shadows rise.

Stern as that voice which in the desert cried  
Majestic prophecy and mystic woe,  
And poured its warnings o'er the Jordan's tide—  
Thou, 'mid the dreary wilderness of life,  
With bleeding feet and burning soul didst go,  
And flung thyself into th' arena's strife.

Naked and hungered, with what bitter scorn,  
Banned from sweet charities of earth and sky,  
By passions and impulsive senses torn,  
At earthly banquets, poisonous yet sweet,  
Didst thou thy Nature's ruthless wants supply,  
Earth's locusts and its bitter honey eat!

Like forkèd tongues of fire round blackened wood  
That leave charred ashes where was glowing flame,  
Thy lurid idols made thy heart their food  
And ruined and consumed it evermore,  
And powerless now the best belovèd name  
That cold dead heart to kindle or restore.

And therefore wears thy brow its sullen scorn,  
And therefore glooms thy large prophetic eye,  
And in thy song are cadences forlorn,  
Which blend their sighs with lingering echoes fine  
Of thrilling sweetness, yet of agony—  
Grand revelations, utterances divine.

Not thus her song. The seraph chorus bowed  
And leant entranced from jasper thrones to hear  
A mortal's voice so nigh the throne of God.  
Its rich Hellenic harmonies had power  
Of wide reverberation far and near.  
A woman's witness to her God they bore !

Amid the world's wild roar, that tender song,  
Throughout its jarring discords heard between,  
Rung out heroic protest against wrong.  
Where coward souls had recklessly despaired,  
That dove-like heart with fortitude serene  
Through Sorrow's whelming flood victorious dared,

And won Faith's vernal promise ; glowing words  
Revealed eternal hopes, and music fraught

Ravished the silences with sweet accords.  
Upon her lips the altar's living coal  
With cherub glories circled mortal thought,  
And birth consummate stirred within her soul.

Genius, God-born, full filled its worshipper,  
And flowed God-voiced, as flows the sacred river,  
Through holy places ever and for ever !  
Mild guardian angels smiled above her head,  
And round her hearth their shelt'ring pinions spread,  
And o'er that face beloved a halo shed !

She came !—the tumult of thy soul subsided,  
As erst beside the Gate called Beautiful,  
A shining Angel o'er the waters glided.  
Lo ! the dark stream became a fountain blessed—  
So did her presence all thy being lull,  
As to thy lip that purest lip was pressed.

Thy genius to her stainless genius knelt,  
And with pathetic reverential awe  
The holiness of womanhood was felt  
Deep in thy soul ; to thee, she was a shrine

Of sanctuary—inexorable law—  
The earthly human won to God's divine !

Ah ! by that healing kiss, be thou assoiled !  
The radiant Twins whose joys in Heaven are shown  
(The Mortal and Immortal), thus uncoiled  
The death-doom which was long the curse of One.  
She, by that love which pressed to thine embrace,  
By her own star-crowned soul has claimed thy place.

## MESMERISM.

## A DEATH - BED CONFESSION.

## I.

'Twas here we met that eve ; the harvest moon  
Shone steadfast, large and bright.  
Warm pulses stirred the air, as in mid-noon ;  
A joy filled all the night.  
But chill my heart with boding gloom  
When we three met in this dark room.

## II.

'Twas here she sate ; her long luxuriant hair  
A silver crescent bound,  
(A crescent such as Roman women wear ;)  
One soft thick curl unwound  
Hung down her neck its loose bright fold ;  
Ah ! dainty ivory and gold,

## III.

How fair ! her long, dark lashes drooping low  
Half veiled her downcast eyes ;  
But I could read upon her virgin brow  
A terror, a surprise,  
As if she felt, poor, fragile flower,  
The awful menace of that hour !

## IV.

My flower ! she ever seemed as one who bloomed  
For angels, not for earth.  
Pathetic sweetness, as of one foredoomed,  
Hung round her, from her birth.  
In that fair form there seemed a strife,  
A struggle as 'twixt Death and Life.

## V.

I hoped to conquer Death and thought at last  
Through strong magnetic aid  
To wrestle with the languor which had cast  
O'er that sweet brow its shade ;  
To save that Life, I would have given  
All peace on earth, all joy in heaven !

## VI.

I sent for one, whose Art most strangely swayed  
Both mind and body's health,  
And with a fevered hope I sought his aid,  
And offered untold wealth  
If his magnetic power could save  
My cherished blossom from the grave.

## VII.

He came. Think you it was no pang to bring  
This serpent to my Eve?  
Each day some sweet familiar joy took wing  
And yet I dared not grieve.  
He said no influence must be  
Between them—and I left them free.

## VIII.

I yielded for a time ; I saw she gained  
Something of tender bloom,  
A deeper sweetness o'er her beauty reigned,  
A delicate perfume  
Of graceful health ; "One trial more,"  
I sighed, "and then this task is o'er."



## IX.

I must be brief!—'twas here we met, I said  
    (Methinks I see them still),  
For the last time. She sate with drooping head  
    And he gazed on her; will  
And power in that dark eye intense—  
His heart all ice, his love all sense.

## X.

I had borne much. This time, as 'twas the last,  
    He seemed resolved to strain,  
Beyond all pangs through which I yet had passed,  
    My jealous, maddened pain.  
With a voluptuous sensuousness  
His fingers lingered o'er each tress.

## XI.

He touched her hand, he bent above her brow,  
    Her neck, her limbs; the whole  
Of that fair body 'neath his will did bow;  
    He seemed to sway her soul.  
No quivering lyre could yield as much  
Obedience to its master's touch.

## XII.

I watched him well. I saw as once he waved  
Above her head his hands,  
That flames fell from them ; once I madly braved  
His resolute commands,  
And rushed towards her,—God ! to see  
Her turn to him—to *him* ! from me.

## XIII.

I strove to speak, my voice seemed weak and strange ;  
Thick foam was on my lips—  
“Pause, pause,” I said ; I saw her features change  
As when a black eclipse  
Makes void the sky of the great Sun . . .  
“’Tis o’er,” he said, “my work is done.”

## XIV.

He touched her hand, “Do I now hold thee, sweet ?  
Thou’rt mine by spirit might—  
Then come with me.” She rose upon her feet  
Out—out into the night.  
I followed swift her gliding tread,  
Poor angel ! by a demon led.

## XV.

As drowning men a lifetime's former sin,  
Without a break or flaw,  
Recall at once, all bare and clear within,  
I felt, I heard, I saw,  
But neither word nor sign allowed.  
I followed, bound as in my shroud,

## XVI.

Through my old hall ; its banners stirred  
As moved by a strong wind,  
Yet as we passed no sound, no step was heard ;  
The burnished shields which lined  
The walls were lit as with a flame,  
And clashed together as we came !

## XVII.

Through the arched porch its gloom a warning shed ;  
But that pale form shone white  
Before me, and those snowy robes outspread.  
I followed through the night.  
My bloodhounds knew as well, yet why  
Howled they so loud as we passed by ?

## XVIII.

Among her flowers,—they slept 'mid dew and balm,  
Nature's deep heart was still—  
Our triple shadow blent with the soft calm  
An element of ill.  
From some dim cloud, as we went past,  
Large sudden drops were o'er them cast.

## XIX.

Beside our lake, which 'neath its cedars slept  
(I tell thee 'twas no dream),  
A lurid ripple o'er its surface crept,  
A wan phosphoric gleam,  
And through the gleam an upturned face  
Of mocking menace I could trace!

## XX.

Through the oak wood its branches closed and  
spread  
Between us and the sky—  
But on, still on, he never turned his head,  
Nor spoke, and she, led by  
Blind instinct, her own footsteps laid  
In every footprint his had made!

## XXI.

Upwards we strained through the brief August night,  
Far, far we onward sped.  
The round moon long had set, the morning's light  
Flamed o'er us wild and red—  
Until on yon accursed hill  
She, he, and I at length stood still.

## XXII.

“I've done my work, and now I bid thee speak.”  
Instant at his command,  
With faint low gasp for words she seemed to seek.  
He fiercely raised his hand—  
And then I saw the pale lips stirred,  
But a faint murmur all I heard.

## XXIII.

“Nay, strive not, swerve not, thou art mine, my  
sweet ;  
Forget thy waking pride.”  
She fell before him, clasping low his feet  
And prostrate at his side ;  
Her long fair hair, all loose unwound,  
Like angel's wings shone on the ground.

## XXIV.

“Tell him thou lovest me.” A wild, dumb strife,  
A deep emotion stole  
O'er that wan face. “I've given your statue life,  
Your fair Undine a soul.”

(Was that the wind's low piercing moan,  
Or broke her heart in that faint groan?)

## XXV.

He turned to me, “I tell thee, she is mine,  
We love, and we are young ;  
No other hand shall draw a song divine  
From the sweet lute I strung ;  
My creature ! whom I snatched from death !  
My Eve ! born of my very breath !

## XXVI.

“Canst thou not see I've drawn from thine her heart,  
Each pulse and each desire ?  
Her very life is of my life a part,  
Bound by a chord of fire ;  
Sprung from the joy of our embrace,  
Earth yet shall see a nobler race !

## XXVII.

“For aye divorced from thee. Speak not ; one word  
Would wake her—and she dies.  
One word from thee would pierce—a sword ;  
Yet make the sacrifice  
If thou wouldst win her !—Death will free,  
And Death alone, her bond to me.”

## XXVIII.

“Awake !” My voice like the last trumpet pealed.  
She started wild, and dim,  
She looked around, and all was then revealed.  
She turned from me to him.  
All, all, in that one look she read.  
One sob—Who said that she was dead ?

## XXIX.

Yes ! dead. The ermine lives not when its robe  
Receives some soiling stain ;  
And poison breaks clear glass. I dare not probe  
The madness of that pain.  
I raised her in my arms, I bore  
Her home with frantic speed—no more !

## XXX.

It was my work. He warned me, yet I spoke.

Mine all the guilt, the pain.

I tell you 'twas *my* voice, my voice which broke

Her sleep's magnetic chain.

It was thus planned by him to add

A pang—oh no, I am not mad!

## XXXI.

In vain. I will not think of him. I bore

Her home, my arms close round

That pallid form, while from her lips gushed o'er

Her blood upon the ground.

He loved her—knew she was my bride ;

Lost thus to him. Enough, she died !

## XXXII.

That dull, dead sound—that broken heart that burst,

O'ercharged as it had been

By that strange life—and he with skill accursed

The end had all foreseen—

That plashing sound, I hear it yet,

Still with that stain my lips are wet !



## XXXIII.

That dull, dead sound—those drops tracked all the  
path

(I see it in the night).

I reached the porch, my hounds with fierce loud wrath  
Flew out ; but as the light  
Fell on my face, they crouched and whined,  
And I fell speechless, senseless, blind.

## XXXIV.

They bore us here. So tight was my death-clasp,  
They could not loose my hold  
That day, that night. At length, freed from my grasp,  
They bore her stark and cold . . . .  
Sometimes it seems but yesterday—  
Sometimes . . . . . I know not what I say.

## XXXV.

No strength for grief? did I say that? am I  
The finite—infinite—  
Not made for heaven nor hell? Yon starry sky  
Doth hold both day and night.  
All depths of woe or bliss to scan,  
God made in His own image man.

## XXXVI.

Restored in heaven ! an angel with her palm,  
 But not my child—my bride.  
 Speak, man of God ! can heaven this anguish calm,  
 That on my heart, she died ?  
 Alas ! alas ! the bliss foregone  
 Will pierce my heart before God's throne.

## XXXVII.

Seraph ! with thy serene immortal eyes !  
 Not thee, not thee I seek.  
 I miss the little hand, the low replies,  
 The golden hair, the cheek,  
 With its faint rose blush . . . yes, I rave  
 Of life, and yonder is her grave !

## XXXVIII.

You tell me, Preacher, patience conquers grief.  
 Am I not patient ? see,  
 Am I not calm ? when have I sought relief  
 I bear my misery  
 Without a tear, with scarce a sigh,  
 My sole impatience—that I die

## XXXIX.

How could I live? She's dead—and thus I know  
That all of life but breath  
Has died with me. Is death escape? Oh no!  
As life is, so is death.  
Here 'tis but sorrow—there 'tis hell.  
I was foredoomed—I know it well—

## XL.

Here and hereafter—still—yes, still to bear  
A grief undying—vast—  
To love—to lose . . . The Future's dread despair  
Equals the anguished Past.  
In that calm heaven by angels trod  
I seek that form. Forgive, O God! . . . . .

## MY MONOGRAM.

WRITTEN IN ROME, JAN. 7TH, 1867.

## I.

CIRCLES of love and of pleasure,  
Barred by a cross of flame,  
Unite, and divide, and measure  
The letters which form my name.

## II.

The symbols are full and complete,  
Separate yet merged in the whole;  
As life's bitter is blended with sweet,  
So the light and the dark in this scroll.

## III.

In my fate has been sunshine and joy,  
Fair triumphs to heart and to brain;

But the good has had ever alloy,  
And each pleasure was marred by a pain.

## IV.

And all was confused, and I knew  
Neither how to renounce nor aspire,  
Till my soul had unravelled the clue,  
And this truth was burned in it with fire.

## V.

Through yearning, fruition, and loss,  
To make duty my goal and my aim,  
As the circles are held in the cross !  
My life's motto is writ in my name.

## A L I C E.

## I.

IN her golden chamber—  
 Golden with the sun—  
 Where the roses clamber  
 Breathless, one by one ;

## II.

(O'er her casement creeping  
 With their lavish grace,  
 Through her lattice peeping  
 At her happy face,)

## III.

Sitteth fairest Alice  
 Bending calmly there ;  
 Roses, bear no malice,  
 Ye are not so fair.

## IV.

Bending o'er her missal,  
Alice sitteth there ;  
Shamrock, rose, and thistle,  
Carved in jewels rare,

## V.

Clasp the velvet cover,  
With a rare device ;  
Scrolls are blazoned over  
Gold and azure dyes.

## VI.

Argent angels flying,  
Peacock's eyes and wings,  
Martyrs bravely dying,  
Quaint and lovely things.

## VII.

Rubies red, and glowing  
Pearls and emerald sheaves—  
Sapphire rivers flowing,  
Glitter through the leaves.

## VIII.

I, a page, a servant,  
Alice as a queen  
At my love so fervent  
Smiles, with pride serene.

## IX.

All my love, my passion—  
All myself I give,  
True to ancient fashion,  
Loving while I live.

## X.

Claiming nought from Alice,  
Knowing love is vain ;  
Wine poured from a chalice  
Flows not back again.

## XI.

True love is a treasure  
Sacred and divine ;  
Without stint or measure  
Cast upon a shrine.



## XII.

Alice is an altar  
    Flaming with my love,  
Where my prayers I falter  
    As to heaven above.

## XIII.

Kneeling low before her,  
    Every pulse and breath  
Asks but to adore her,  
    Faithful unto death.

TO DEAR OLD BUSHIE, FROM ONE  
WHO LOVED HER.

## I.

MUCH loving and much loved, dare I  
With my weak faltering praise  
Record thy pure fidelity,  
Thy patient loving ways :

## II.

Thy wistful, eager, gasping sighs,  
Our sullen sense to reach ;  
The solemn meanings of thine eyes,  
More clear than uttered speech :

## III.

Thy silent sympathy with tears,  
Thy joy our joys to share,  
In weal and woe through all these years  
Our treasure and our care :

## IV.

Thy dumb adoring gratitude,  
Noble, yet tender too,  
Respondent to each varied mood,  
Not human, but more true ?

## V.

They say we are not kin to thee,  
Thy race unlike our own,—  
Oh that our human friends could be  
Like thee, thou faithful one !

## VI.

The wondrous privilege of love,  
Love perfect and entire,  
Was thine, true heart ; to nought above  
Can human hearts aspire !

## VII.

From all our lives, some faith, some trust,  
With thy dear life is o'er ;  
A lifelong love lies in thy dust ;  
Can human grave hide more ?

“CHARLES DICKENS IS DEAD.”

JUNE 9TH.

I.

A DAY in June ! With sunshine sweet  
 Our English air was filled that day ;  
 Around, the yet green unripe wheat  
 In plenteous vernal furrows lay.

II.

The apples hung upon the boughs—  
 Its sheath no filbert yet had burst ;  
 Unmown the lawns, but in the house  
 Our noblest fruit was plucked the first.

III.

Our crowning sheaf, so full, so fair,  
 Which, slowly mellowing, stately stood,

Cut down and bound, lay garnered there,  
A priceless harvest claimed by God.

IV.

O mystery of futile breath !  
A sob, a gasp, a hurried sigh ;  
O mystery of sudden death !  
How dare we live ? how dare we die ?

V.

Grey Abbey, 'neath thy storied spires  
This consecrated dust enshrine ;  
Peal out the welcome of thy choirs,  
Open for him thy gates divine.

VI.

Something of sweetness, pathos, mirth,  
With him from all our lives is gone ;  
A light has faded from each hearth ;  
Our household words have lost a tone.

VII.

Amongst us men he stood a man  
Of quicker pulses, larger brains ;

But well he knew the red blood ran  
Alike in all our hearts and veins.

## VIII.

And 'tis for this the nations weep  
The genius which both worlds had spanned ;  
Star follows star, deep calls to deep—  
Thou second Shakespeare of our land !

## IX.

Thou art immortal in that tongue,  
The speech of north and east and west,  
Where spoken word and written song  
Our race's Saxon rule attest.

## X.

Grey Abbey ! open wide thy gate ;  
One treasure more we bring to thee,  
In trust, supreme, inviolate,  
Our love his immortality.

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO FRIENDS.

## FIRST FRIEND.

## I.

THE sharp regret, the gnawing pain,  
 The dumb and helpless sense of grief,  
 The struggle which we feel is vain,  
 The tears which never give relief  
     Though still they flow ;  
 The restless longing and the fear,  
 Desiring most what most we dread,  
 The frenzied cries when none can hear,  
 Wild tossings on a sleepless bed,—  
     All these I know.

But they are past ; you see me stand  
 Free from regret, from fear, surprise ;  
 My hand lies calmly in her hand,  
 I falter not in my replies,

And stern and cold  
My eyes meet hers. Their fatal blue  
Has no more power to search me through.  
That tale is told.

## II.

I can withstand her smile. My heart,  
Which leapt if she but shone afar,  
Sees her without a thrill or start,  
Unmoved as frozen billows are,  
When calm they lie  
All stark and hushed beneath the moon,  
No longer swayed by her soft breath,  
Locked in a dark impassive swoon,  
The rolling tides are still as death.  
I hear her sigh,  
And no wild tumult of the soul  
Doth cast me prostrate at her feet ;  
No spirit tempests o'er me roll,  
And no delirium, sad yet sweet,  
Now holds me fast.  
The joy, the passion, and the fever,  
Are dead for ever and for ever.  
The dream is past.



## III.

I feel as feels a shipwrecked man  
Swimming the waves for life's dear sake.  
I yield up all ; the ocean can  
Each joy, each costly treasure take,  
So life be won.  
I yield my Tyrian merchandise—  
Those argosies of hope which give  
Life to man's life, and I arise  
Naked, forlorn ; but yet I live,  
And shall live on.  
You see, my friend, I have o'ercome.  
There is no weakness in this breast.  
Vainly you'd stir the void for some  
Old feeling which it once possessed.  
And yet—and yet—  
Must I not see her once again,  
If but to prove by cold disdain  
That I forget ?

## IV.

That I have read her through and through,  
Indifferent to those queenly charms ;

That I resist, and triumph too—  
    Ah ! but to hold her in these arms,  
            And clasp her close ;  
And by the strong magnetic force  
    Of love, full-statured and complete,  
Draw her to me, as to its source,  
    The sun, is drawn volcanic heat !  
            To gaze on those  
Wild, mystic, and unfathomed eyes,  
    The witchery of that changeful mouth,  
The blond hair falling angel-wise,  
    The tender bloom, the glorious youth,  
            As when, O God !  
I was the fond and foolish slave,  
    Who perished by her cruel scorn,  
Whose heart found in her heart its grave,  
    On whose crushed faith and love upborne  
            She lightly trod  
To reach some other heart less sad,  
    With more of sunshine, less of cloud.  
Some love, I know, and yet are glad ;  
    Some wear its purple, some its shroud :

But I will prove,  
By all this bitter sense of wrong,  
By this deep hatred, fierce and strong . . . .

SECOND FRIEND.

That still you love.

ON THE ITALIAN COLOURS BEING  
REPLACED ON THE PALAZZO VECCHIO.

## I.

O'ER the old tower, like bright flame curled,  
Which leapeth sudden to the sky,  
Its emblem hues all wide unfurled,  
Upsprings the flag of Italy.

## II.

Its emblem hues ! the brave blood shed,  
The true life-blood by heroes given,  
The green palms of the martyred dead,  
The snowy robes they wear in heaven !

## III.

These colours all high hearts must bear ;  
They tell of courage, truth, and faith,  
The heart to know, to will, to dare,  
The threefold life which o'ercomes death.

## IV.

The death which tyrants deemed held fast  
The lands o'er which their armies trod,  
Hath no more power ; the grave is past.  
A living people bless Thee, God.

## v.

Freed from the yoke of alien kings,  
The nations wake to life and breath ;  
Th' immortal from the mortal springs,  
" Out of the body of that death."

## VI.

No sepulchres can freedom hold.  
'Tis life ; and life o'er death must rise.  
Glad bells ring out in triumph bold ;  
Wave, flag of freedom, to the skies !

## VII.

My Florence, which so fair doth lie,  
A dream of beauty at my feet,  
While smiles above that dappled sky,  
While glows around that ripening wheat.

## VIII.

As fair, as shining, and as bright  
Art thou as she we hear came down  
From heaven in bridal robes of white,  
Thy New Jerusalem, St John.

## IX.

And like hers, too, a promise stands  
In this great victory won by thee,  
A hope to all the yearning lands,  
Witness and pledge to Italy.

## THE SEASONS IN ITALY.

## SPRING.

## I.

A BREEZELESS flutter in the air,  
A murmured warbling in the ear,  
A sense of gladness everywhere,  
Of brooding wings which hover near.

## II.

A pulse which thrills, a hope which wakes,  
As youth and hope and love grow strong,  
As each hushed rill its silence breaks  
And stirs the woodland into song.

## III.

A voice which whispers, Spring is born,  
In tender buddings of the leaves,

The rustle of the young green corn,  
Rich promise of its golden sheaves.

## IV.

A full vibration, as of bells  
Which echo sweetly o'er the earth,  
And bear through furthest loveliest dells  
The message of the violet's birth.

## V.

All this I feel, all this I hear ;  
Without the world is fair and bright ;  
Within each bitter falling tear  
Reveals how dark my winter night.

## VI.

Frozen and dead, poor heart of mine !  
Canst thou not melt ? must thou still sigh ?  
Nor wreath the rose, nor drink the wine,  
Nor put thy mourning garments by ?

## VII.

Alas ! for thee earth's joys are vain ;  
Alas ! for thee earth's spring is o'er ;



For thee no bird shall sing again,  
The vernal year shall bloom no more.

## VIII.

Thou hast no part in earth's bright things ;  
Thy tale is told, thy course is run.  
Ah ! without love life knows no springs ;  
Ah ! without love life feels no sun.

## WINTER.

## I.

Oh my pale December roses,  
Pale and faint, yet sweet and fair ;  
Would that when life's autumn closes,  
I such dying smiles may wear !

## II.

Oh how still the wintry sky !  
Blue, wide depths, so pure and cold.  
O'er the hills dim vapours lie,  
Snow in every fleecy fold.

## III.

Silent are the ice-bound streams,  
All the forest bare and drear.  
Youth is dead, with all its dreams,  
Voiceless, leafless, like the year.

## IV.

Do I weep that May is past?  
Do I mourn no summer glow,  
Nor its crimson roses, cast  
Love and life upon thy brow?

## V.

Oh my pale December roses,  
More I prize your faithful bloom,  
Shedding fragrance, ere it closes,  
On my life's dejected gloom!

## VI.

Hope deceived me; love is over  
Life is fading in my breast.  
Roses, let your blossoms cover  
Lonely tomb and peaceful rest!

## A LOVE POEM.

ROSAMOND.

## I.

OH what a golden swarm of dreams  
Came to my couch last night,  
And hovered o'er me with their gleams  
Of soft and mystic light,  
And sucked the sweetness of my sleep  
Through long and quick'ning hours !  
Then left me dewless, rifled, spent,  
As satiate bees leave flowers.

## II.

O pillow ! to thy spell when I  
Had yielded up my soul,  
On magic wings o'er earth and sky  
I flew where yonder roll

The waters of that fatal sea,  
Whose surges heave beside,  
And lave with ceaseless, wailing tears,  
The tomb where sleeps my bride.

## III.

O couch ! whereon I sought my rest,  
Grief-bowed and passion-worn,  
Soon as my limbs thy folds had pressed,  
In spirit was I borne  
At once, from that dark grave, to heaven !  
Then pardoned, free I trod,  
And knelt amid the ransomed ones  
With her I loved, to God !

## IV.

It was so sweet that, even in dreams,  
I knew the dream was vain.  
Too soon, I said, the morning beams  
Will bring back grief again.  
(For dreams are gems which only shine,  
Illusive, on Night's brow ;—  
O'er Day's pure forehead, clear and bright,  
Such jewels may not glow.)

## V.

And then this wearied, baffled life,  
    With struggle rent and torn,  
Must needs resume its toil and strife  
    With the bereaving morn.  
And beckoning palms, and argent wings,  
    And bowers of asphodel,  
Will change to sands and dreary wastes,  
    And welcomes, to farewells.

## VI.

Yet still I slept ; and then, as stars  
    That faintly, one by one,  
Expectant, hushed, look through cloud-bars  
    At the departing sun ;—  
Or roses flushed with crimson bloom,  
    Mature, perfumed, complete,  
Drop in their places garland-wise  
    Around a trellised seat ;

## VII.

Incarnate in fair shapes of light,  
    The hopes of my glad prime

Appeared, as seraph faces bright,  
Circling an arch sublime.  
A godlike mystery arose  
Within my 'wilderer brain,  
Still deepening, as a ringer's chime  
Vibrates and peals again.

## VIII.

And there, upheld, made manifest,  
In all that pomp of light—  
Wert thou, my loved, my lost, my best,  
In angel vesture white ;  
Like a Madonna cherub-bound,  
My rose ! I saw thee stand,  
The halo on thy virgin brow,  
The lily in thy hand.

## IX.

O my beloved ! was this a sign,  
A symbol that in thee  
My life should merge, and, blent with thine,  
Thy love its guerdon be ?  
That all the longing infinite,  
The future, present, past,

Should tend through every stage of life  
To thee, its first, its last ?

## X.

Since that primeval moment, when  
From discord God's own breath  
Evoked one concord, perfect then  
Of Love, and Life, and Death,  
Till now, I know I found thee not  
In my long drought of heart ;  
And, found too late, our lives but met  
To sever and to part.

## XI.

But yet was I made man for this,  
For this that Cross was mine.  
The mortal failed to reach his bliss,  
Not so shall the Divine !  
And yet—and yet—my human love  
Still vainly, fondly sighs ;  
I pine to touch thy hand, thy cheek,  
To kiss thy lips, thine eyes.

## XII.

To clasp thee closer, close to press  
The glory of thy hair,  
To watch thy blushing loveliness  
When I proclaim thee fair. . . .  
Alas ! how vain to long, to yearn !  
How impotent, Desire !  
An angel waves a sword which girds  
My Paradise with fire !

## XIII.

And—Death the angel, Life the sword—  
Thy Death, my Life, must be  
Both vanquished, ere I claim, Adored !  
My Eden lost, in thee !



## A ROMAN STREET.

## I.

TRANCED in the languid joy of summer noon,  
In dreamy calm, I gazed upon the street,  
All hushed and still beneath the fervid heat.

## II.

Fast throbb'd around the deep full heart of June,  
As with a halo shone transfigured all  
O'er which the lidless eye of heaven did fall.

## III.

The fountain glistened as an orient stream,  
Each frowning house and sordid wall was bright,  
Baptised in beauty by that golden light.

## IV.

But with more burnished splendour fell its beam  
On yon majestic column vast and prone,  
Relic sublime of glorious empires gone !

## V.

Their memory returned. I seemed to hear  
Once more, the tread of armèd hosts—glad cries—  
Barbaric triumphs, clashing victories !

## VI.

But soon the vision fled, for crawling near  
A skulking spy on vilest task intent,  
Passed by, with roving looks and visage bent.

## VII.

Cowled and barefooted noiselessly then crept  
A bearded monk, with drowsy leering air,  
Fingering his beads and muttering his prayer.

## VIII.

Beyond, crouched near the fountain, prostrate slept  
A beggar lad ; pathetic 'mid his torn  
And abject rags a crimson rose was worn.

## IX.

And still a shadow of the Roman pride,  
A stateliness 'mid sorrow, I could trace,  
Though soiled and crushed, on his defeatured face.

## X.

“The beggar, priest, and spy, dare these,” I sighed,  
“Wear with unblushing front the Roman name  
And claim as theirs, this heritage of fame?”

## XI.

“Type of their faith, yon droning monk—their law,  
The spy—and for a people, yon poor slave,  
Bankrupt in all life’s gifts but one, the grave.”

## XII.

I felt the iron in my soul—I saw  
No more the radiance that but now had been ;  
The heart’s content had vanished from the scene.

## XIII.

I looked around, the glowing air unstirred  
O’er all a naked truth revealing cast,  
And mocked the Present mirrored in the Past.

## XIV.

And was this all ? Ah, no ! for like a bird,  
Bright winged within its cage, I saw a flower  
Which o’er barred casements twined its sumptuous  
dower,

## XV.

Diaphanous, with lucent leaves outspread,  
And soft pale bloom as if the light and air  
Their gentlest, tenderest hues had mingled there.

## XVI.

Its fair transparent beauty round it shed  
A virgin consecration and a grace  
As if a ray of God illumed the place.

## XVII.

Docile to law divine this gracious bloom,  
Profusely fragrant smiled ; its being flowed  
In mute unconscious sympathy with God.

## XVIII.

Though mean its birthplace and its home,  
(I looked around) they could not mar nor shade  
That azure breast as Heaven itself arrayed !

## XIX.

Pliant, uncramped, unthwarted, fetterless,  
Responsive to its Maker's will it grew,  
And airs of Paradise around it blew.

## XX.

No fresher brighter loveliness could bless  
The eyes of Eve in Eden's primal hours,  
When, fairest flower, she trod a world of flowers.

## XXI.

Glad grew my heart ; again all nature smiled,  
And soothed, as by maternal fond endeavour,  
The sadness of my spirit fled for ever.

## XXII.

God ! who thus vivifiedst this undefiled  
And holy blossom which so pure and sweet  
Untainted blushes in the noisome street,

## XXIII.

Shed Thou some germ which in these hearts debased  
May yield new life, regenerate and expand,  
And grow to fulness to redeem their land !

## XXIV.

Sprung from that fragile bud, on pinions vast  
A mighty mission rose, a promise spoke,  
And o'er dark clouds effulgent morning woke.

## XXV.

A glorious message in its leaves I read,  
As from that Bush whose fire divinely glowed,  
And burned in one great heart the Will of God.

## XXVI.

That thus a trampled people should be freed—  
O God! what dreams of Freedom seemed to roll  
With that high thought, like thunders o'er my soul!

## A PORTRAIT FROM MEMORY.

1868.

A PERSIAN princess, tall and fair,  
With lustrous lengths of amber hair,  
A lovely, tender, small child's face,  
A floating step, a queenly grace,  
A lily robe, all striped and barred  
With lines of gold, and diapered  
With black, as once Venetian dames  
Wore, and yet wear, within the frames  
Of Bonifazio, Tintoret,  
And glorious Titian (jewels set  
On palace walls within that shrine  
Vowed to Thalassa the Divine,  
Which men call Venice); two grey eyes,  
With liquid, subtle, flatteries  
For all they look on; frank, serene,  
Pure from all grief, or care, or sin;

For grief will dim, sin leaves a stain  
Which brightest eyes must still retain :  
But hers are cloudless, clear, and bright,  
Like angel eyes, all love, all light.

A rosy fan hung from her wrist  
(A white flower by a loory kissed),  
And round her fair throat's graceful curve  
Were coral beads, whose hue might serve  
To match the full lips—ripe and sweet.  
So noble, perfect, and complete  
Her beauty ; yet she wears it calm,  
As queens their crown, as saints their palm.

Such was the vision once I saw—  
Peerless, without a fleck or flaw,  
'Mid blossoms faint and trembling trees  
All fluttering in the soft south breeze.  
The passionate air breathed forth desire,  
Adoring nature glowed with fire,  
And love weighed down the drooping flowers,  
And murmured through the bird-full bowers.  
Its pulse was felt as sunbeams came  
And scorched the garden as with flame.



And love thrilled each young worshipper  
Who then vowed life and soul to her.

Hers was the bounty but to be,  
That which all hearts rejoiced to see ;  
The largess hers, but ours the boon ;  
As when o'er earth the fair proud moon  
Shines with her soft resplendent face,  
A benediction and a grace  
Enrich our lives ; the liberal skies  
Thus gladden with bright stars our eyes ;  
Thus choicest gifts are granted free ;  
Thus beauty is God's charity.

## DEFEATED.

## I.

O CIRCLING hills ! O murmuring stream !  
O moon ! so fair and round and bright,  
Rising as softly as a dream,  
Born in the silence of the night.

## II.

What rapture in the glittering air !  
What chords of joy in lyres divine !  
What peace and gladness everywhere,  
Save in this weary heart of mine !

## III.

In every field the corn is cut,  
And stands in goodly yellow sheaves ;  
And ripe the kernel in each nut,  
And lined with seed the fern's green leaves.

## IV.

But harvestless my barren land,  
My hazel boughs are bare and sere ;  
No hand clasps yearningly my hand,  
My empty life is chill and drear.

## V.

O my lost youth ! could I reclaim  
One fragment of its wasted powers,  
Redeem the loss, rekindle flame  
From ashes spent, from faded flowers,

## VI.

I would yet struggle, toil, and strive,  
And raise my soaring hopes on high ;  
And if I failed to nobly live,  
Thou, thou shouldst watch me bravely die.

## VII.

But all is vain ; and vainer still  
To seek to stay life's parting breath.  
O heart, submit ! surrender, will !  
Who can resist the embrace of death ?

## VIII.

This final sorrow is the worst ;  
For courage, youth, and pride are gone.  
I cannot face grief as at first,  
Defy its sting, and tread it down.

## IX.

Yet fight I must—I dare not yield ;  
The clarions blow, the lists are set ;  
This broken heart, the battle-field  
Where love its leaguered foes has met.

## X.

Defeat is sure ; the treacherous past  
Cripples my arm and pierces sore ;  
Ghost follows ghost, until the last  
Looks with thine eyes, and all is o'er.







